ACROSS / A12
Panlilio files plunder raps against Lapids

WORLD / A20
Air France jet with 228 people aboard missing over the Atlantic Ocean

BUSINESS / B1
Petron unit buys stake in thrift bank

SPORTS / A14
Defending champs Nadal, Ivanovic ousted from French Open

NEWS / A2
DOH confirms 5 new flu cases; total now 21

Bankrupt GM enters era of gov't ownership

WASHINGTON—GENERAL MOTORS (GM), once the symbol of US economic might and dynamism, filed for bankruptcy protection in New York on Monday in a deal that would give the government a 60-percent ownership stake in the 100-year-old auto giant and expand its reach into big business.

"I never ever could have believed that

BANKRUPT A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, June 2, 2009 ★ 5 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 174 P18 online: www.inquirer.net

Socialites file charges to recover lost jewelry

By Fernando del Mundo

THE TRANSACTION STARTED AS A straight business deal, with no hint that it was all part of what may be an elaborate jewelry scam that had caught some of the cream of Philippine high society.

At least three cases have been filed in a city court and the Department of Justice is

SOCIALITES A2

'Villar sold 3 foreclosed lots to gov't'

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. MARIA ANA CONSUELO "MAmy" Madrigal yesterday presented evidence that she claimed showed that Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. was responsible for diverting the C-5 road extension project to traverse Las Piñas City so it would snake through his property.

Madrigal said Villar's real estate companies received payments for road right-of-way that, in some instances, were "outrageously overpriced."

She also presented documents showing that three lots Villar had sold to the government in connection with the road project had been actually foreclosed and considered properties of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

Villar, a no-show at the hearing, and his camp had ready answers to the media on the points raised by Madrigal in her presentation.

Villar denied that he or his companies were able to get P400 million in right-of-way payments.

He was referring to an incorrect report quoting Madrigal's lawyer Ernesto Francisco Jr. that Madrigal would testify during the trial that Villar pocketed a total of P400 million in right-of-way payments from the diversion of the road extension project.

"I don't know where such amount came from . . . There is no P400 million. We did not receive such amount," Villar told reporters.

Villar also dismissed as "kuryoso" (dubbed) erroneous Madrigal's allegation that three lots he owned were sold to the government when these were already foreclosed and then owned by the BSP.

"When we were paid [for the right of way], we immediately handed it to the central bank. That's why it's a faux

VILLAR A11

SEN. JAMBY Madrigal explains to her colleagues that some of the properties sold to the government for right-of-way in the C-5 Extension road were already foreclosed. PHOTO/NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Noli, Chiz, Erap top poll

Pupils also ready with hand sanitizers

By Cathy C. Yamsuan and Philip C. Tubeza

BACK TO SCHOOL? DON'T LET Bobo and Janice leave home without their notebooks, pencils and hand sanitizers.

Yesterday, public school principals advised students on the importance of singing "Happy Birthday," not just once but twice, while washing their hands to prevent the spread of the influenza A (H1N1) virus.

Concerned parents with higher levels of disposable income did their part by slipping in rubbing alcohol, wet wipes or towels into their children's school bags.

At Manila Science High

PUPILS A4

FIRST LESSON Pupils are taught how to wash their hands properly on the first day of classes at Batasan Elementary School in Quezon City as a precautionary measure against the spread of swine flu on the campuses. RAFFY LERMA

Mar gains in Pulse survey

IT'S STILL ANYBODY'S game for five presidential aspirants.

Vice President Noli de Castro, Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, deposed President Joseph "Erap" Estrada, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. and Sen. Manuel "Mar" Roxas II are neck and neck in the race to win the votes of Filipinos for next year's presidential election, according to the results of a survey that a private polling firm conducted last month.

"If the May 10 elections were held today, five individuals would garner about the same percentage or vote cast," Jose Maria L. Tolosada, chief research fellow of Pulse Asia Inc., yesterday said in a statement.

Of the 1,200 adults interviewed by Pulse Asia nationwide from May 4 to 17 for their choice of the next president, 18 percent voted for De Castro; 17 percent selected Escudero; 15 percent went for Estrada; 14 percent preferred Villar; and 13 percent picked Roxas.

Given the survey's margin of error of plus-or-minus 3 percentage points or the 95 percent confidence level, the five politicians are in a statistical tie.

While other aspirants saw their ratings drop, Roxas posted a 5-percentage-point improvement from the 8 percent recorded in February.

A little over a week after Roxas and broadcaster Korina

NOLI A4

EDUCATION: WHAT MATTERS MOST

Playwright protests use of her work in erroneous textbook

By Erika Sauler

(Second of a series)

THE TEARS ARE GONE, BUT the nightmares persist.

Playwright Debbie Ann Tan was shocked when her name cropped up in a news article as the author of an erroneous "literary piece" in a fresh batch of English textbooks for public schools published last year by the Department of Education (DepEd).

"When I first saw it, I didn't believe it because I don't have a project with the DepEd," says Tan, who is also an English teacher

i-TEAM Report
Fernando del Mundo
Chief

"When I confirmed that it was me, my world crashed," she says. "It would have future implications. What if somebody read such a thing and say 'Sir, this is how you write?'"

The flawed piece, "Dreams for All," attributed to Tan appeared in the "English for You and Me" Reading for Grade 6 textbook published by Book Wise Publishing Inc. and

PLAYWRIGHT A6

English for carabaos or flip-glish

By Antonio Calipio Go

(Editor's Note: The writer is a self-styled "risk books" crusader who has been pointing out errors in textbooks published by the Department of Education in the last eleven years.)

HERE ARE PASSAGES TAKEN from five textbooks being used now in all public elementary schools in the Philippines.

Three books, all titled "English for You and Me," were published by Book Wise Publishing House Inc. as part of the National Program Support for Basic Education (Loan Number 7393-PH) of the Department of Education (DepEd) under an

ENGLISH A6

SECURITY TALKS US Defense Secretary Robert Gates (left) is welcomed by his Filipino counterpart, Gilbert Teodoro Jr., at the Malacañang Palace. RICKY RAZON

MANILA VISIT

Gates: Nokor may test long-range missile

US DEFENSE SECRETARY Robert Gates yesterday said that North Korea could be preparing to test a long-range missile that Korean media reported was designed to fly as far as the US territory of Alaska, 4,800 kilometers away.

"We have seen some signs that they may be doing something with another long-reaching missile," Gates said at a joint press conference with Philippine Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr.

"But at this point it's not clear what they're going to do," said Gates, who made a flying visit to the Philippines on his way home from a regional security conference in Singapore.

In Seoul, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said North Korea had transported by train its most advanced missile to a launch site near China and the missile could be ready to launch in a week or two.

As fresh threats from North Korea sharpened, the Philippines and its partners in the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) threw their support behind South Korea's efforts to rein in its unrepentant neighbor to the north.

"We stand shoulder to shoulder with our brethren in the Republic of Korea in wanting to have a nuclear-free peninsula," President Macapagal-Arroyo said in an interview with the Korean media aired on Radyo ng Bayan.

Mr. Arroyo, who is attending an Asean summit in South Korea, called Pyongyang's recent nuclear test "disturbing."

Mr. Arroyo said the Philippines would support whatever resolution the UN Security Council would come up with in response to North Korea's nuclear testing and continued threat of a nuclear confrontation.

GATES A11

WEATHER FORECAST

TODAY Cloudy and [illegible] rain and thunderstorms [illegible]

Metro Manila	Mostly cloudy	Legazpi	Mostly cloudy
Baguio	Mostly cloudy	Naga	Cloudy with rain
Tuguegarao	Mostly cloudy	Cebu	Mostly cloudy
Iloilo	Mostly cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly cloudy
Kalibo	Cloudy with rain	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with rain
Puerto Princesa	Cloudy with rain	Zamboanga	Mostly cloudy
Legaspi	Cloudy with rain	Cagayan de Oro	Mostly cloudy
Virac	Cloudy with rain	Davao	Mostly cloudy

Second FRONTPAGE

E-mail: pi_news@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/main

LOTTO

6/42

37	42	28	19	7	9	6

(All 6 numbers combined)

FOUR DIGIT

9	6	6	2	5	8	8

SUERTRES

0	4	2

MEGALOTTO 6/45

19	33	37	38	39

P5,375,498.40

DOH confirms 5 new flu cases

Number raises to 21 Influenza A(H1N1) patients in the country

By Dona Z. Pazolingan

HEALTH SECRETARY FRANCISCO DUQUE III announced yesterday that tests had confirmed five new Influenza A(H1N1) cases, raising the country's total to 21.

Duque said two of the new cases of swine flu involved a 31-year-old man and a 48-year-old woman who were guests at a wedding in Zambales on May 17 that was also attended by two Taiwanese who fell sick after returning to Taiwan.

The three other new cases—a 19-year-old man, a 45-year-old man and his common-law partner, a 39-year-old woman—manifested flu symptoms upon their return from the United States.

All five are Filipinos.

Duque said seven of the 21 cases had tested negative to repeat tests, and three of them had been discharged from a hospital while four others were to be sent home yesterday.

Twenty of the cases were Filipinos, and one was a 13-year-old foreign boy.

The two new cases from the wedding has brought to 10 the number of guests who fell ill with the virus, of a total of 50 on to wedding guests.

They are considered "second-generation transmission" cases since they fell ill after coming into contact with the "index case," a Taiwanese worker and her daughter.

Duque said the two new confirmed cases from Zambales were likely the last cases from the wedding.

"I suppose that's the last of it because we are past [the incubation period]. We have no third-generation contamination. There is an indication that...We may see as much a community-level contamination," he said in a news conference yesterday.

Authorities estimate that the virus has a 10-day incubation period, which means that symptoms such as fever, cough, cold and sore throat start to appear up to 10 days after a person has been infected.

Dr. Eric Tayag, chief of the Department of Health's National Epidemiology Center, said the 10 sick wedding guests did not appear to have infected family and household members and other close contacts.

He said the DOH was able to reach 31 guests, including five who experienced flu-like symptoms but tested negative for swine flu virus.

"They could have been our third generation transmission cases, but they were all negative," Tayag said.

Duque said all the 21 confirmed cases showed "relatively mild" flu symptoms and responded well to the anti-viral drug Oseltamivir, as well as supportive treatment while confined in undisclosed health facilities.

DOH: Watch out for dengue, too

THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS called on the public to be vigilant against dengue, even while taking precautions against the Influenza A(H1N1) virus.

Dr. Eric Tayag, director of the DOH National Epidemiology Center, reminded the public of the need to take steps against dengue, particularly to eliminate the breeding sites of the male aedes aegypti that causes dengue fever.

Dengue-causing mosquitoes breed in stagnant waters that accumulate in idle containers during the rainy season.

"Search and destroy the breeding sites of mosquitoes," Tayag said over radio station dzMM over the weekend.

Stagnant water should be disposed of while clean ones in containers for later use should be covered to prevent mosquitoes from laying their eggs, he said.

He urged immediate medical attention for those exhibiting symptoms of dengue such as high fever, headache and skin rashes.

Tayag also discouraged indiscriminate fogging. He said this would only drive mosquitoes to another community.

In a recent briefing on the swine flu virus, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said dengue was much more fatal, so far, than the new flu. He said there had been 67 deaths from January to April this year due to dengue.—Norman Bordadora

Palace: Nothing new in Salceda's P100-B proposal

By Christian V. Esguerra

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID there was "nothing new" in a proposal made by an economic adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo for a P100-billion stimulus package to benefit the middle class.

Gary Olivar, deputy presidential spokesman on economic affairs, said Albay Gov. Joey Salceda's proposal "has already been considered. I don't think this is anything new."

Salceda had suggested the government provide a P100-billion economic stimulus package to give scholarships, health benefits, mass housing and rice rebates to the middle class.

Salceda made the proposal after the economy registered 8.4 percent growth in the first quarter of the year.

"The lowest under the eight-year-old Arroyo administration, the slow growth in gross domestic product (GDP) should provide the 'best argument' for a stimulus package which has been sadly lacking in the 2009 budget," he had said.

Olivar told reporters that any suggestions for additional government spending should be assessed based on their impact on the budget deficit.

He said it would also be more prudent to wait for the effects of the government's strategy to feed itself this year to materialize, the first half of the year. The strategy calls for increased spending in areas like infrastructure.

"We need to keep in mind that there's already been a lot of obligations that have been [met] by government agencies and now we're just waiting for the money to actually flow," he said.

With government economic managers convinced that the global financial crisis was "bottoming out," Olivar said it was time to "start thinking ahead."

Among other things, Salceda wants of the government to provide a P10-billion tax rebate or middle-income taxpayers which would give them an additional P30,000 to spend.

Congratulations to all GSIS members who can NOW pick their scholars!

Following the computer-assisted drawing of lots by the GSIS Scholarship Program, below are the 280 lucky recipients of a four- or five-year college scholarship grant from GSIS starting this school year.

All winners are given 30 days from the date of publication of winners to submit the Nomination Form and other requirements, namely:

1. Barangay clearance of scholastic grant with latest ITR of parents (if parents are employed)
2. Enrollment Assessment Form (if already available)

The nomination form is available at any GSIS Office or may be downloaded from the GSIS website at www.gsis.gov.ph

Failure to submit the nomination form within the 30 day period will forfeit the grant.

We hereby certify as correct and valid the GSIS Scholarship Raffle held on May 7, 2008

GSIS

Gonzalez: 2nd Dacer witness coming home

By Norman Bordadora

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ yesterday confirmed that another former police officer, Glenn Dumlao, would soon be extradited from the United States to stand as a second state witness in the reopening of the Dacer-Corbito double murder case.

Gonzalez made the disclosure after announcing the expected arrival later this week of former Supt. Cesar Mancao who is to be turned over by United States marshals to Philippine authorities in Los Angeles today.

Gonzalez said Dumlao security commissioned his willingness to cooperate in the Dacer-Corbito case, which could lead to renewed charges against former police chief and now senator, Panfilo Lacson.

"He talked to me," Gonzalez said when asked in a news conference how Dumlao made known his intention to cooperate after he initially contested his extradition in connection with the murder of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito in 2000.

Mancao and Dumlao were ranking officials of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) who were among 22 persons charged in 2001 in the Dacer-Corbito killings. The two, together with another Paoctf officer, Michael Ray Aquino, fled to the United States. Aquino is still contesting his extradition.

Gonzalez said he was told that Dumlao was going to affirm his first affidavit in 2001, which exonerated his involvement in the surveillance of a subject nicknamed "Ineha," believed to be Dacer.

Gonzalez said it was the Filipino consul in Los Angeles who first informed him of Dumlao's plans to cooperate.

He said that the government had made an overture to Dumlao to cooperate to help in the reinvestigation.

"Its secretary said sounds usually our detained Filipinos in their jurisdictions and it was during one of those visits that Dumlao made known his intention.

After his 2001 affidavit, Dumlao executed two more affidavits that made it appear that he was recanting his allegations.

Gonzalez said Dumlao had dropped his case contesting his extradition.

"While on your [That's over]," Gonzalez told reporters.

Gonzalez said it would be ideal if he could enter the preliminary investigation of the Dacer-Corbito case when both Dumlao and former Supt. Cesar Mancao were in the country.

"We'd dominate one bomb. Otherwise, it would be repetitive," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez said he was hoping the three between Mancao's and Dumlao's arrival wouldn't be too long.

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Noli, Chiz, Erap top Pulse Asia survey

Sandoval announced on television that they were getting married, some Filipinos surveyed by Pulse Asia said they would vote for the presidential aspirant if **sheshina** were held at that time.

Not among the leading contenders were Sen. Loren Legarda, who got 12 percent in February. The oldest in 7 percent in the May survey.

De Castro, Estrada and Villar each slid down by a single point. Support for Estrada's stayed at 17 percent.

Top bet in Metro

The May survey showed that Estrada is now the top presidential candidate of voters from Metro Manila and socioeconomic class ABC (26 percent). Estrada and De Castro were the top two preferences of voters in Mindanao, getting 27 percent and 21 percent, respectively.

It was a tossup for the five leading contenders in other areas and classes. The margin of error for Metro Manila, the rest of Luzon, the Visayas and Mindanao was plus or minus 6 percentage points, also in the 95 percent confidence level.

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of possible presidential candidates, which also included Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay (4 percent, up from 2 percent), Sen. Panfilo Lacson (4 percent, down from 6 percent) and Sen. Richard Gordon (1 percent).

Businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan (1 percent), Chief Justice Reynato Puno (1 percent), Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro (1 percent), ECMiddle leader Mike Velarde (0.4 percent), Sens. Juan Ponce Enrile and Ramon Revilla Jr., Vice President Noli de Castro and Pulse Asia survey result were not a "challenge" for him to drive more, but he would have to campaign this with the Social Weather Stations survey set to be released soon.

"It's OK. We should not be affected by the monthly changes in [survey results]," he said.

Villar said that to get the top spot and become President, he would need public support in the form of opinion polls. He said he would have to campaign this with the Social Weather Stations survey set to be released soon.

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Reasons for choices

The most cited reason for the respondents' choices was the candidate's being helpful to mind others (24 percent), particularly the poor (27.3 percent) and veteran Filipinos (reelect 16.6 percent).

This was followed by the candidate's accomplishments (11.6 percent), being clean in not corrupt (7.1 percent), goodness (5.6 percent) and being a fighter (3.4 percent).

Pulse Asia said its party-list survey results were "gifts from our countrymen. I thank them for trusting me. You can expect that this will serve as an inspiration for me to continue fighting for the small, oppressed and abused, so that everyone will have a fair chance in life."

He said the "most important" survey is the one to be conducted in May 2010," and that the most pressing issue at this point was the worsening educational system in the country.

"We need 30,000 classrooms. We should not believe [copy] statistics," Roxas said, pointing out that the "shortages" of classrooms—utilized in two shifts—did not address the huge backlog of classrooms across the country.

Enrollees said he had not yet made up his mind on whether to run for President.

"Survey results are taken in to consideration, but any decision will be made after my birthday. I'm not yet qualified [because of the age requirement]," a beaming Escudero said when interviewed before the caravan started.

He will turn 40 on Oct. 18, but the last day of filing of certificate of candidacy will fall in on Nov. 30. The Constitution requires national candidates—for president, vice president and senators—to be at least 40 years old.

"I always say that whatever topic he survey should not there's a party and [ang] abuso e [and] whatever kinds at the horizon should not get mad or feel sad because this is just a survey. The balloting on election Day will be the basis ... for the presidency," he said. —Michael Lim Ubac and Cynthia D. Baldoza

Roxas cites propoor programs for rating gain

SEN. MAR ROXAS (STARR): of his first-point gain in the latest Pulse Asia survey is his "propoor advocacies and programs."

"The chairman is starting to feel my antipoverty advocacies. I thank our countrymen who think that I can improve their lives and the way this country is being run," he said.

Sen. Panfilo Escudero said he was "humbled by and grateful for the people's confidence in me."

Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., for his part, said the Pulse Asia survey would serve as a "challenge" for him to drive more, but he would have to campaign this with the Social Weather Stations survey set to be released soon.

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Pupils also ready with hand sanitizers

GOING TO THE DOGS: A teacher conducts the first day of class with her pet dog in a makeshift room at Bunakan Elementary School in Barangay San Antonio, Anander C. Lim town in Zamboanga Sibugay. (STAR/RICARDO)

First school day suspended

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ON the first day of school, classes were suspended at Sinuligan-Sangbay Elementary School in Naga town in Zamboanga Sibugay.

"We neither want to report for work," said Mayor Ceferino Aldana.

Since the abduction of teachers Jocelyn Sales, Jocelyn Enriquez and Saoud Mandi on March 13, their colleagues "are not willing to go back there unless they are given regular security," Aldana said.

If the school cannot find any teacher, the school, which has more than 100 pupils, would be closed.

Aldana said she was going to meet with other local government officials to discuss possible solutions to the problem.

"We are scouting for Muslim teachers who are willing to (under their services in that school)," she said.

In Basilan, Vice Gov. Al Hajdarsak Jaldon said he received information that the three kidnapped teachers had been brought to Barangay Kautilan in Lantawan town.

"I received this report [from an informant] three days after the release of three teachers from Zamboanga City," Jaldadul said.

Three teachers of Lamitan Graduate School—Jocelyn Reyes, Raphael Mayorado and Federico Quinto—were freed on May 31.

But the three from Sinuligan-Sangbay Elementary School remain in captivity. "They are reportedly still in the hands of Abu Sayyaf Group leader Furuji Indanan," the vice governor said.

On April 6, the families of the teachers received a call from the kidnappers demanding a ransom of P10 million.

Aldana said the kidnappers were told that no ransom would be paid. Since then, there has been no contact with the kidnappers and their captives. —Ador S. Alfaro, *Inquirer Mindanao*

School on Padre Faura Avenue in Ermita, Manila, some of the students had hand sanitizers in their bags, according to an appreciation.

In principal, Flora A. Valdez, said their faculty discussed last week the problem of the h1N1(1) flu virus. "We discussed the signs and symptoms, preventive measures and the latest global update," she said.

Instructions were also given to the school nurse to immediately send home students who have fever.

On the campus of Ateneo High School on Bel-Air in Makati, students were busy washing their hands. Most of the faucets had running water. A line of laundry soap was provided in the washing area in front of the school canteen.

In principal, Angela T. Ong, executive vice president, said the measures to minimize transmission of the virus and to refrain from spitting.

Health students said they were aware that catching the virus had dangerous consequences. For this reason, Shei Andrea Alba, 15, and their friend Jamie Gil, 15, shared a bottle of rubbing alcohol with Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos's grandniece Ahmel Nicholette Carmona, also 15.

The three girls said they brought clean towels which they would use to cover their mouths when coughing or sneezing.

"But really, I would rather be at home. I was surprised classes resumed so soon after the virus outbreak," said the elder Alba.

Carmona said her mother instructed her to avoid talking with people who are coughing or who have fever. "My mother was very nervous when I left for school this morning," she said to Filipino.

School supplies first

At Batasan Elementary School in Quezon, Manila, however, parents were more concerned with providing their children food and school supplies rather than basic measures, rubbing alcohol or masks.

Precious Arellanos, 39, said her 7-year-old daughter Gwen Ysa had no school supplies as her father had not received his salary last month.

"In case my husband gets his pay for working in a barge in the past, we will get Gwen Ysa's school supplies first. The rubbing alcohol can come later," Arellanos said.

For her part, Glenn Sabanto said her priority was to get a certified true copy of her daughter's birth certificate so she can be accepted in Grade 1.

Smooth, peaceful opening

The opening of the new school year went "smoothly," Education Secretary Jesli Lapus said yesterday.

"The early preparations we had promised to be very effective. There was no traffic gridlock and we had demonstrations on proper hand washing and proper hygiene," said Lapus, presiding over a commencement with Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and other government officials at the Department of Education Complex main office.

At least 18 million public school children trooped back to school yesterday.

Chief Supt. Roberto Rondez, head of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the school opening had been peaceful as far as there were no reported crime incidents in Metro Manila schools and nearby areas.

Some 11,000 policemen were deployed to patrol schools in Metro Manila, he said, an hour under full alert status since Sunday and if June 15.

Illegal school fees

Lapus said the Depkd Bulletin Rationale Command Center would remain open almost until Friday to receive queries and complaints from concerned parents and students.

So far, many of the calls had been complaints against public school officials who allegedly demanded illegal school fees from a student could be recorded, and not about the swine flu virus, he said.

Lapus also said he had yet to receive any report of students being told to go home because they had flu-like symptoms. "The situation is starting as some of our students just might have a cough or a runny nose very careful about this."

He pointed out that Depsc had noted that schools should be more concerned with dengue now there were already more than 5,000 reported cases of the mosquito-borne disease in the country.

Response Level 1

"The AH1N1 (flu) has a cure and so far, we only have a small number of confirmed cases of this flu virus," Lapus said.

To enhance monitoring, Lapus issued Depkd Order No. 30 directing regional directors and school superintendents to oversee the four-tier Response Level System in schools that Depkd hopes would help prevent any outbreak of the virus.

He said the country's school system was under Response Level 2 as there were 16 confirmed cases of the swine flu virus and there were no confirmed cases in schools and no sustained community or human to human transmission.

Private schools

Fernando Raling, president of the Federation of Associations of Private School Administrators (Fapsa), said it would be better for the 1,600 Fapsa school members to open their school opening to June 15 so they could get more information about the virus from the Department of Health (DOH).

Students from the private schools must likely figure out holidays ahead, where the suggests 08:30-AM 19:15 a string ... I think the DOH is doing its best ... but it cannot or to know that the DOH is having a hard time to other women coming more some [people] have been uncooperative," Raling said in comments.

Classroom without a roof

In Bolinao, Pangasinan, Benjamin Ruelles, principal of Dewey Elementary School, yesterday gave up his office so students could start classes there.

The school buildings in Bolinao and other towns in western Pangasinan were destroyed when Typhoon "Frank" pounded the province last month. Some classrooms were left roofless.

At Zaragoza National High School also in Bolinao, teacher Rosan Pizarro said newly delivered textbooks for two sections in fourth year were drenched during the typhoon.

"We tried to dry them, but the pages were much together," she said.

In Alaminos City, another area hardest hit by the typhoon, schools superintendent Renato Heay said many classes were held in government buildings and chapels.

Mosquito nets

Josefina Datuin-ding, Depkd Cordillera director, said many schools in her area opened with chronically treated mosquito nets obtained from donations and doors, as a precaution against dengue.

In Nueva Ecija, school and health officials were monitoring the conditions of a 10-year-old girl who showed symptoms of being infected with the AH1N1(1) virus. The girl had just arrived from the United States.

In Dipan, Isabela, 30-year old Maura Bernardino said she recycled the unused sheets of her children's notebooks and asked them to use their old school bags for this school year.

Bring back uniforms

In Lucena City, some parents assailed the government order scrapping the compulsory wearing of school uniforms in primary and secondary public schools.

In Cebu City, as a result of the global financial crisis, many parents were forced to consider their children to public schools as they could no longer afford sending them to private schools.

Depkd Central Visayas Director Bernardo Bergonia said the enrollees from private schools to public schools would increase because they have yet to pay in full their tuition fees in the previous school year.

Bring your own chair

Bohol also asked classrooms, but education officials assure their assurance that no classes will be held under a "mango tree."

In Iligan City, the biggest elementary school in the region, teacher Anna Bendebar said their enrollment had increased so much from last year, they asked some pupils to bring their own chairs. Fifth reporters *Jaime Mayor Jr.* and *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Madelene Reyes, Carmela Reyes and Charlene Gayabyab, Inquirer Central Luzon; Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon; Dixie Tauntos, Jomi Arcenio, Joey Gabieta, Carla T. Gomez, Jerome Aning, Nestor Burgos Jr. and Jhunnex Napud*, Inquirer Visayas

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, June 2, 2009
9th Week in Ordinary Time
Marcellinus / Peter

1st Reading: Wis 6:4-16
Gospel: Mk 12:13-17

Jewish leaders sent to trick some Pharisees with members of Herod's party with the purpose of trapping him in his own words. They came and said to Jesus, "Master, we know that you are true, you are not afraid of anyone, for you do not look at men's faces but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar? Should we pay them or not?" But Jesus saw through their trick and answered, "Why are you testing me? Bring me a silver coin and let me see it." They brought him one and Jesus asked, "Whose picture is this, and whose name?" They answered, "Caesar's." Then Jesus said, "Return to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

Commentary

Many centuries found that they might find an occasion to accuse him. Jesus was saying that there is religious freedom, even in a non-worldly politics. This is also a traditional Christian principle, whereby Church and State are separate. It could also be that Jesus was advocating a life of true concern poverty. After all, the less we have of (money), the less we have to give back to God, and again, if we rendered unto God all the things that belong to God, there would be nothing left for Caesar.

Are we to lend Caesar when he urges us to give or support our trading when Jesus said clear we must not fail? Not all: we may refuse to serve Caesar as soldiers and must try to resist paying for Caesar's army. But, the fact is that, by our lifestyle, we've made a deal with Caesar to support his armies. Do we not pay taxes? Do we not buy goods that are taxed? Do we not drive cars that we don't use Are anything. Whatever our interpretation, one thing is for sure: nothing is more likely to remove the followers of Christ than encouraging them to meddle in disputes about worldly politics.

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LPG price up P1.50/kg

By Amy R. Remo

LIQUEFIED PETROleum gas retailers raised their prices by P1.50 per kilogram effective midnight yesterday due to an increase in the LPG international contract price this month.

The rates for the price of an 11-kg LPG cylinder by P16.50.

In a phone interview, LPG Marketers Association (LPGMA) president Arnel Ty explained that the latest increase was due to this month's higher international contract price, which was by $45 per metric ton from $394 per MT in May.

To read this at the retail level, the increase was equivalent to a P2.88 per kg price hike or P27.50 per cylinder.

For the season, Ty said LPG retailers will increase prices again on Monday by another P1 per kg or P11 per cylinder.

The said increase was pegged on to them by local suppliers to reflect higher product costs.

LPGMA member companies, which supply LPG products to an estimated 30 percent of the Luzon market, carry brands such as Island Gas, Regasco Gas, Pilipinas Gas, Gas Gas, Solaw Gas and Handy Gas.

Socialites file charges to recover lost jewelry

From page A1

recover jewelry worth nearly P50 million from Maly Elena Sy-Guiranda, who used to work on the staff of a well-known socialite and availed jewelry on the side as an agent or consignee.

Sen. Loren Legarda is to deliver today a privilege speech denouncing the activity and calling for an inquiry in a bid to plug loopholes in the operation of jewelshops.

In a complaint filed with a prosecutor's office, one victim—a businesswoman—said that Guiranda had first contacted her on Feb. 1, 2008, and that she availed a diamond tennis choker with 23.33 total weight carat (TWCT) and a diamond tennis bracelet with 10.60 TWCT for 6 years.

Because of her reputation in social circles, she got them.

A text agreement for the consignment of the jewelry was signed between the two and Guiranda issued 45 post-dated checks to cover 12 monthly payments for a total amount of P1,000,000. She was to get a commission for the sale.

In the event the items were not sold, according to the agreement, Guiranda was to return them.

The first checks were honored when cashed.

Guiranda, 47, went back for more merchandise three months later, beginning in May, between Mrs. Belmonte and Guiranda has been 28 transactions were forged between the businesswoman and Guiranda or her representatives.

All told, there were 21 transactions between the two, including the February deal, worth P7.3 million in jewelry of diamonds, gold, sapphire and emerald, all covered by consignment documents and post-dated checks.

Checks begin bouncing

The checks began bouncing in December—either three was insufficient funds in the bank account or the account had been closed.

Despite demands, Guiranda and her representatives failed to return the jewelry or pay the remainder of amounts due on the transactions, the businesswoman later said in her complaint, a copy of which was entered in the inquest.

"It came to my knowledge sometime later that the said exclusive pieces of jewelry are already in the possession of various jewelshops," the businesswoman said.

"Guiranda and her cohorts apparently caused my pieces of jewelry to be pawned, and I personally bear the brunt of the fault I had to face," she said.

"It likewise came to my knowledge that aside from getting the pawned value for my jewelry, the respondents sold the pieces at cheaper (some ticket) to unsuspecting buyers to further unjustifiably and unreasonably profit."

Aside from Guiranda, named in the complaint for violations of the Revising Checks Law, syndicated estafa and sanctions were Guiranda's husband Antonio Guiranda, two sisters and one employee.

Two other victims filed separate cases involving the same criminal offenses against Guiranda's group with the Department of Justice (DOJ), one facing the same basic activity.

Two of the complainants to the DOJ were businesswoman Michael Tolentino and his wife Barbara. The other complainant declined to be identified for the moment, siting with the businesswoman.

The two, who requested anonymity, said they had been frustrated by celebrities culled in the middle of the night to get their missing text messages. But they also said they would come out publicly now to confront Guiranda.

In the complaint filed on April 1 with the DOJ, the Tolentinos allege that they were defrauded of jewelry worth P5.6 million. When they demanded to get the consignment, they were told by Guiranda's father, David Sy, to redeem the pawn tickets. They later discovered that not all the jewelry being sought to be recovered were in the pawn shops.

The third complainant discovered the 'scam' when she received a total of P.75 million in jewelry.

"There are other victims who are coming out and filing cases," said one victim, a well-known socialite who said she sees a piece she had entrusted for sale to Guiranda that she was now trying to recover at a party, worn by someone else. She did not want to embarrass her and large client.

But at another party she saw her again wearing her jewelry. She recently asked her where she got it and was told she had bought it from Guiranda.

An inquirer reporter tried to get a reaction yesterday from Guiranda at her apartment at the La Mirage Isola Condominium in Makati City, but women there said the couple left the place in September last year.

One woman said Guiranda had filed for insolvency in a Makati court and listed the jewelry allegedly secured fraudulently, as part of the couple's assets. Guiranda sought a two-year moratorium against creditors.

Guiranda's husband also showed in at Chinese General Hospital in Manila in January, stayed there for a month, and later transferred to Makati Medical Center. Her lawyer reportedly claimed her condition prevented her from responding to the charges.

Socialites Aversas' aide

Geraundy's reverse, updated in March 2008, said she was chief of staff of then Marie "Bobby" Aversa, board director and member of the Manila Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei.

The complainants stressed that Aversa was not involved in the alleged shenanigans.

The paper said that Guiranda was also managing director of fast fries firm and Cuda, "tasked with purchase and sale of antiques and modern art pieces from jewelry to furniture and fixtures."

Legarda has filed a resolution calling for an inquiry into the "practices and structural gaps in the procedures of pawnshops and financial agents and lenders with the end in view of facilitating a review and amendment of the Pawnshop Law, the Anti-Fencing Law and other pertinent laws, rules and regulations that govern the public transactions, abuses and other unfairness activities." With a report from Cathy Benavente

Playwright protests use of her work in erroneous textbook

From page A1

authored by Elsie Coda.

The textbook was published under a multimillion-dollar DepEd program updating English textbooks funded by the World Bank.

In February, the Inquirer published a critique of the textbook by various "task force" members under Antonio Calipjo Go.

The more than 500 foot-long that Go claims to have uncovered included passages from the "Dreams for All" essay. "Responsible individuals ... Benevolent, even while plunging, they make decisions ... Dragon is also call 'dreams' ... Curious characters are also taken from dreams of the cartoonists ... Dreaming is a symptom not."

In response, Education Secretary Jesli Lapus and the DepEd's Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) Director Nicanor Pilor said the errors cited by Go were from Jose Isreay pieces taken out of context.

Lapus and Pilor said Tan was the author of the essay.

Maliciously singled out

Tan feels she was maliciously singled out and plans to take legal action. She says she did not even write the essay Coda "adopted" here's article "The World of Dreams," which appeared in Pinoy Isang magazine, she says.

Disowned and distressed.

Tan failed to participate in this year's Virgin Labfest, an annual festival for playwrights, directors and actors sponsored by the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the Ateneo Blue Ribbon.

"I wouldn't have much to writing," says the two-time Palanca awardee. She says the DepEd Basics affected her.

Tan says also hurt by Pilor's hands-off stance. "No one seemed to be at fault. Logically, how could that be when it's a textbook on subjects?" she says.

"The DepEd wrote that they already informed Book Wise about the matter. So, in other words, they're not answering directly any demand. They're pointing [the] finger at Book Wise," says Tan's lawyer.

Book Wise is the author/publisher's distributor.

'Local politics will do Lakas-Kampi merger in'

Con-ass resolution squeaks by with just days to spare

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON constitutional amendments yesterday convened in emergency session and approved a resolution to convene Congress into a constituent assembly (Con-ass) to amend the Constitution.

With the approval of the committee, the controversial Resolution 1109 can finally be submitted for plenary debate, barely a week before Congress adjourns.

The committee disapproved the measure two weeks ago. But last week, it backtracked and decided to refer the Con-ass resolution to the plenary without (a) approval.

In the committee of rules, however, Bayan Muna Rep. Teodoro Casiño pointed out a parliamentary blunder: a resolution cannot be considered for plenary debate unless it has been approved by the committee challenging it. He moved to disapprove the inclusion of the Con-ass resolution in yesterday's agenda.

Majority Floor Leader Arthur Defensor, chair of the rules committee, after consulting with legal experts, had to agree that Casiño was right. He announced that HR 1109 could not be included in the agenda unless it was adopted in the committee level.

"If (the committee) wants to send it back (to be considered for discussion), it has to appear on it. It may call a special meeting," Defensor said, adding that there was nothing stopping the committee from doing so.

Casiño said he was "happy that Con-ass resolution was stopped, given that there was no more time for it." "But he appeared to spoke too soon.

The committee on constitutional amendments, chaired by La Union Rep. Victor Ortega, had really met in special session and voted 23-19 to approve the measure—even though its original author, Committee Vice Rep. Luis Villafuerte, had voted against his own draft.

"We have to get this over with," said Iponkot Pimentel Negrado-We- meeting comes (from Mataraing). It's part of our agenda," he said.

Negrado said he wanted the issue on the floor by today so to preserve

The Con-ass resolution's joint voting scheme has been criticized by the Senate because it would render the senators a minority. The majority bloc in the House, acting as three votes, could achieve the three-fourth majority vote needed to convene the constituent assembly and pass any constitutional amendment. The Senate insists that voting should be separate for each chamber. With a report from Allison M. Lopez

Senate passes measure extending land reform

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE PASSED ON THIRD reading late yesterday the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) bill, which seeks to extend for another five years the land acquisition and distribution program of the government with a budget of P1.47 billion.

Twelve senators voted to pass Senate Bill No. 2686, Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri and Benigno Aquino III—whose respective families own land inside of land subjected to the CARP.

All 2008 is an "act strengthening the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, amending for the purpose certain provisions of Republic Act No. 6657, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law of 1988, as amended, and appropriating funds therefore."

No one cast a negative vote on the bill whose principal author was Sen. Gregorio Honasan, chair of the Senate agrarian reform committee.

Soon, after Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile banged the gavel approving the bill, the gallery filled with mass, farmers and other agrarian reform advocates, erupted in applause.

The 12 senators who supported the measure were Enrile, Honasan, Jinggoy Estrada, Jokoy Arroyo, Ayalan Pimentel Jr., Pia Cayetano, Mar Roxas, Richard Gordon, Rodolfo Biazon, Francis Pangilinan, Francis Escudero and Manuel Lapid.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, who was in his office during the roll-call vote, said he would have cast a yes vote as well.

Zubiri abstained, saying "our lands have been Gloped."

"I felt that I should not avail myself of whatever privileges given to beneficiaries or landowners. For a program to flourish, we need to help each other," he said.

Roxas said he voted in favor of the measure "notwithstanding... possible conflict of interest." The Senate Agenda cites to which he belongs is also landed locally.

In the House of Representatives, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program Extension with Reform (CARPER) only have the numbers to win approval, but the House leadership does not have the political will to push it.

This according to Akbayan partylist Rep. Risa Hontiveros who cited the strong landlord lobby in the House for the delay in the passage of a new agrarian reform bill.

"CARPER has the support of 113 members, with 54 committee and 60 non-committee signing that they would vote for the bill. It has been certified as urgent by the administration. What is needed is the political will of Speaker (Prospero) Nograles to mobilize support for CARPER and handle the challenging tactics posed by the landlords in Congress," Hontiveros said.

With Congress set to adjourn on June 5, Hontiveros said the House should end the period of interpellation and move on to the period of amendment. With a report from Jill C. Cabangangan Jr.

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OPINION

Still objectionable

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES APPEARS TO be dead set on passing the controversial right-of-reply bill before it adjourns sine die this week. The measure has been amended by removing a provision that would impose the penalty of imprisonment on violators and by reducing the fines for violations. Now the congressional railroad is ready to pass the measure, despite the strong objection of the media.

EDITORIAL Despite the amendments, the right of reply bill remains objectionable. The congressmen seem to have calmed the police we made at the very beginning of the discussion of the bill, and so we will say it again: The right of reply is better enabled through editorial discretion and voluntary acts rather than statutory dictation through a state entity or process that infringes upon the freedom of the press.

It is best to allow the media to accord the right of reply to people who want to avail themselves of it through existing procedures and venues instead of giving government the power to dictate to the media what they should do. Give government an inch and there's no telling what it would do to control media. There are already existing procedures and venues to the major newspapers: the office of the ombudsman or readers' advocate, the letters to the editor section, the convention box of some newspapers, among other things. Complainants can write directly to the senior editors to ask to be given the opportunity to reply to news stories or articles that they consider adverse or untrue.

Nor the members of the Philippine Press Institute, there is the Philippine Press Council whose main concern now is to afford news sources and news subjects the right of reply.

Complaining parties can always file libel suits as a last resort.

These venues and procedures are all available in the major newspapers. They are also being adopted by the smaller papers and even by the community newspapers. So, why does government want to have a say in enforcing the right of reply and why does it want to have coercive power in implementing this right?

We reiterate our objection to the right of reply—yes, even to the so-called "watered-down" version—on the following grounds:

1. A right of reply bill would violate the right of journalists under the freedom of the press clause of the Constitution to edit or determine the contents of their publications.

2. A statutory right of reply would have a chilling effect on free speech; it would discourage journalists from announcing on controversial issues when they know they can be coerced to provide free space and free air time for all replies.

3. It would impose a penalty on the basis of the contents of a newspaper. The first phase of the penalty resulting from the compelled printing of a reply is material in terms of the cost of printing. It would take away space that could be devoted to other material that the newspaper may have preferred to publish.

4. It would impose the virtue of responsibility on the media. Former Chief Justice Warren Earl Burger of the US Supreme Court said that "[e]very responsibility is ever translated by the Constitution and like many other virtues, it cannot be legislated."

5. It would affect not just the traditional media—newspapers, radio and TV—but it could also lead to burdensome censorship because it also covers bloggers, websites, e-mail, social networking sites, zoom and even iPod users. This was noted by Kabataan Rep. Raymond Palatino last week.

Even if the measure is passed by Congress, it could be a futile exercise because it would be vetoed by President Macapagal-Arroyo. The historian reported last Feb. 27 that President Macapagal-Arroyo pledged not to sign any bill curtailing press freedoms and suggested that she would veto the controversial right of reply measure if Congress passed it. Similar stories were carried by the Philippine Star, Page 1, Feb. 27; Malaya, Page 10/4, Feb. 28; and the Manila Times, Page 1, Feb. 27.

If the right of reply bill is passed by Congress, we will hold the President to her promise. If she reneges on her promise, then the press will have no recourse but to wage its fight against the controversial measure all the way to the Supreme Court.

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Gags from the past

VIEWPOINT

Joaquin L. Mercado

MONTH OVER, RHONDA PRESIDENT AND First Gentleman Mike. A photo of Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro and his wife Ivy. Nikki Tiodoro of Tiodoro on their website, is ungrammatical: "The First First Couple"? Is the future here now?

A former United Nations communications specialist entered our interest in websites of "presidentiables." Our UK duty stations in Thailand had overlapped. This UP graduate has moved east to Saudi Arabia. From her Dutch wife flat, she drew up "a cursory review" of official networking tools used by 12 "presidentiables." The finds her review available to Viewpoint, with a caveat: "Things change so quickly on their websites and blogspots." She cited Chiz Escudero's online facility for being mostly Filipino into English and Pinoy Lacson's limited networks bulletined into 140 slots. "I don't want to be accused of seeing inaccurate statements. So, don't use my name for now."

Oh. Got it. Anonymity for accuracy is unbeatable.

But cyberspace technology elects so rapidly. And Filipino machine-age machine politics drives change just as endlessly. A Utopian point of honest reality is simply not possible. Snapshots will have to do.

All "presidentiables," from Sen. Loren Legarda to Mayor Alfonso Ongs, "have multiple presences on the Internet, albeit in varying degrees," she wrote. "They're into Facebook, Friendster, Multiply, Twitter and others. They now have capital for social communication and reaching public constituencies."

Ascertainment 1: 2 billion people used the Internet worldwide in 2008. That's 32 percent over 2003 levels. About 80 percent of Icelanders are "wired." Sweden follows at 76 percent.

Then, 3 out of 5,000 Filipinos get on the Net either at home or to surf's. The UN Human Development Report notes. This lags behind Malaysia's 61%. The list brought Barack Obama's appeal for election contributions into 400 one-of-a-century Internet campaigns.

Without exception, all subjects have upload the stored speeches, vitae, photos, etc. They are usually new social media to create their respective virtual communities of supporters... Their websites invite people to subscribe to their "cause" (e.g., Friends of Mar, Members Team, etc.). They offer constructive responses for feedback.

Bayan, Bayanihan and Bayanido are "the most successful in building their virtual constituencies. Their e-forums and blogs are dynamic, interactive and robust... Threads of discussions and feedback on issues are raised by candidates or followers themselves. Sites are regularly updated."

The not-yet-40 Escudero reads demographic tables. He seeks to tap into the "youth bulge." Bayanihan's site claims a total of 33,000 registered users. Bayan gets some 200 to 300 visitors per day. The rest have yet to double their blogs to get at least 20 to 30 hits per day.

"Panfilo Lacson's blogs are very much one-way," the analysis notes. "They register zero comments."

Pete Cayetano released a report, titled "The Size of the Internet I." Based on a survey of 732 technology-fanboys and stakeholders, the conclusion is: "The Internet will continue to spread in a flattening and empowering world."

It will not be painless. But everyone felt a "democratized new world" would be possible by 2009, the BBC reported. Concerns range from clashing commercial interests, "irresponsibility" (different formats working together) to government curbs. Firewalls by China and Iran are cited as examples.

Here, the "presidentiables" could find their names pegged by the pending right-of-reply bill. (HB5396) Representative Raul del Mar and Raymond Palatino note that change to the bill now includes e-mails, texts, Internet social networking sites, zoom iPod users and other electronic devices. If approved, and Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo withdrew on her promise to veto the measure, it would bring to Gloria's "presidentiables" budding websites into a gagged material bog.

* * *

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Flowers from the rubble

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

IVE ALWAYS LIKED THE IMAGE OF FLOWers from the rubble, enough to have made it the title of my first book, a collection of early columns. I first saw it in a poem by a Vietnamese about Vietnam at the height of the Vietnam War. It wasn't flowers but something else, though, if I recall right, it was rolls of grass shooting out. From the rubble that the German bad bomb turned into by its standards, he wrote, the Vietnamese spirit would push out like rolls of grass. Not exactly the most romantic, conventionally, like the pushing out from the hearty thicket of thrush. I'm inside to that effect.

Whether it's rolls of grass or flowers or the first sprouts of greenery thrusting out of the black pit, it's a great image for the assertive power of life. It's a great image for the resilience of a people. It's a great image for the indomitability of the human spirit.

That was the phrase that kept looming through my head while in Puerto Princesa the other weekend. What pushed through the rubble in my brain (courtesy of a night spent roaming in the wonders of the place) was the sudden realization that underneath the rubble was sandwiched talent. Have turned this country into a desolate place where hope withers patch on top of the wreckage and ruin, tufts of grass or flowers or the first sprouts of greenery are pushing out. Determinedly, vigorously, courageously. It did help that the place bristled with hardiness and greenery to sprout the image. But it did help even more that the place bristled with life, or pulsed with the spirit of a community interested.

I thought: We do not lack for places like this in the country. Specifically, we do not lack for towns or cities or provinces that are blessed leaders with character and vision to lead them, are offering a decent life for their inhabitants and hope for the rest of the populace. They are testaments in the wilderness of the race, in the capacity of the people to pull themselves up by their bootstraps.

Naga City is one of them. My favorite image of Jesse Robredo is still that of being knee-deep in mud, shoveling the putrid muck out of the place just after the typhoon. I suspect that if Cebu had been visited by a typhoon last Feb. 27 instead of Ondoy last year and vice versa, Mayor Tomas Osmeña would have been the one knee-deep in mud, shoveling the putrid muck out of the city, and Jesse Robredo would be the one sitting pretty. It had left mud spills across the city, and besides, awoke at the crack of one very grey morning to find that my parents' annual visit, as usual, had been first to start cleaning up the mess. He was soon joined by other people in the effort. Example has a way of compelling more than all the edicts issues in the world.

Pampanga and Manila are two others. At the height of the small campaign against Ed Panlilio, his detractors complained bitterly about his inefficiency or ineptitude, proof of it apparently being his refusal to join the prevailing overseas search for greener pastures. Several years after, Panlilio has proved to be the most effective governor in the province, and Pampanga is now the most improved province in the country. Well, why on earth should he? Why on earth should he put the money in the hands of people who were responsible in the first place for the messes and pressing, or indeed decreasing, during their leaves' watch?

I have Duddit and Grace Padaca in those that stood in public service, though it is one of the supreme ironies of life (which is why evil often wins) that the one deserving to be voted out of office is the one who has done the most to upgrade their virtues, they lose better things to do. From where I stand, however, curbing corruption, which both have done magnificently in their turn, is an epic achievement in and of itself. Especially in times when thievery is exalted and the thieves who are caught red-handed justify like a heroin in a movie to boot.

There were not as well Dengue that ran rampant in Manila in 2006 that killed 1,000 people. Not as well the Ondoy that killed 1,000 people. Not as well the Ondoy that killed 1,000 people. Not as well the Ondoy

Odd hearing

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

for a TRO. Why the sudden haste?

• • •

Another objection raised by the minority is that the COW investigation should cover only the cases in it happened in the 14th Congress, i.e., the issues in the 2009 budget. The minority insists that the majority is raising points that supposedly took place way before Villar became a senator in 2001, specifically from 1996 to the present. If this is the case, it argues, it may also investigate the Senate's leaking case which has been stagnating in court for nine years, or the fiasco issue of 10 years ago.

• • •

There are all valid questions, but as witnessed in the proceedings today, I thought the deputy of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon made sense. Stressing that the C.O. extension was undertaken by the government, including the payment of most right of way, Biazon said: "Let's not look back." That, stumped Madrigal for a minute, after which she retorted that the issue is the overpriced payments for Villar's coal estate properties compared to those for other lots in the area. This is a valid point, but it has to be proved. Like, even as no one for the other areas were not as inflated as Villar's subdivisions.

Madrigal argued that the original plan to extend the road to Daang Hari (Sen. Edgardo Angara) or Alabang-Zapote (Sen. Manuel Villar) would have been cheaper. To counter this, Biazon said that the original plan was to build a road to Tagaytay, not to Daang Hari or Alabang-Zapote. Besides

The price of liberty

COMELEC CHAIRMAN JOSE MELO let it be known that the 2010 elections might be postponed because of a costly maneuver by shadowy persons or groups in a desire for chaos. If this happens, our country would be plunged into turmoil.

A sudden coup might just succeed this time and the contemplated military rule could last longer than any of its would-be coups. Civil liberties would again be suppressed. Our economy would be set back. Poverty would worsen.

I thus appeal to the Commission on Elections to do everything in its power to implement the law providing for the automation of next year's elections. Having been threatened by the Comelec itself in the past, I know

League of Cities of the Philippines

Resolution No. 2009-01

Strongly Opposing the Passage of House Bill No. 6303 and Calling for its Outright Rejection

WHEREAS, on 18 November 2008, the Supreme Court issued its decision in the consolidated cases of *"League of Cities vs. COMELEC, et al (G.R. Nos. 176951, 177499, 178056)"* and declared as **UNCONSTITUTIONAL** the sixteen (16) cityhood laws, namely: Republic Act Nos. 9389, 9390, 9391, 9392, 9394, 9398, 9404, 9405, 9407, 9408, 9409, 9434, 9435, 9436, and 9491;

WHEREAS, on May 21, 2009 the Supreme Court has issued the entry of judgment in the consolidated cases, stating that the decision is now final and executory;

WHEREAS, the League of Cities fully supports and agrees with the Supreme Court decision for being in accordance with the rule of law and the supremacy of the Constitution;

WHEREAS, the 16 municipalities have caused the filing of House Bill No. 6303 which seeks to amend Section 450 of the Local Government Code by exempting the sixteen (16) municipalities from the income requirement provided by law;

WHEREAS, House Bill No. 6303 is a blatant and contemptuous attempt to thwart and circumvent the ruling of the Supreme Court;

WHEREAS, the League is vehemently opposing House Bill No. 6303 in the strongest possible terms, on the following grounds:

1. As ruled by the Supreme Court, the exemption clause in HB No. 6303 violates the equal protection clause of the Constitution. The Supreme Court ruled that **even if the exemption provision in the Cityhood Laws were written in Section 450 of the Local Government Code, as amended by RA 9009, such exemption would still be unconstitutional for violation of the equal protection clause.**

2. HB No. 6303 violates Section 6, Article X of the Constitution. The Supreme Court has declared that Section 6, Article X of the Constitution requires "[u]niform and non-discriminatory criteria as prescribed in the Local Government Code" as being "essential to implement a fair and reasonable distribution of national taxes to all local government units". **HB 6303 clearly provides a non-uniform and discriminatory criterion for the creation of cities. Worse, HB 6303 does not provide for any income requirement for municipalities who are entitled to avail of the exemption therein.**

3. The interpretation of the laws and the Constitution is a function of our Courts and Congress cannot, by means of legislation, overturn the decision of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has clearly decided that RA 9009 does not provide any exemption, and Congress cannot re-enact laws that have already been declared null and void by the highest court of the land. **HB 6303 is a dangerous attempt to undermine the separation of powers ordained in our Constitution.**

NOW, THEREFORE, the League of Cities of the Philippines resolves to:

1. STRONGLY AND VEHEMENTLY OPPOSE the passage of House Bill No. 6303;

2. CALL for the outright rejection of House Bill No. 6303 for being void and unconstitutional; and

3. URGE the Honorable Members of the 14th Congress to uphold the rule of law and the principles laid down by the Supreme Court in the LCP Decision.

APPROVE unanimously by the General Assembly.

Across the NATION

'Pentagon' gang kidnaps another woman in North Cotabato

Panlilio files plunder raps vs Lapids

Lapid: Ploy rehashed by political foes

THE DECADE-OLD mine-of-quarry scam in Pampanga caught up on Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid and his son Mark on Monday when Governor Panlilio sued them and three of their former subordinates in the provincial capitol.

PAMPANGA Gov. Ed Panlilio shows a copy of the plunder complaint he filed against the former provincial governors at the Office of the Ombudsman in Quezon City.

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SAYING HIS PREDECESSORS used their position "to unjustly enrich themselves," Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio yesterday filed plunder charges against Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid and his son Mark, blaming them and three other former provincial officials for the alleged non-remittance of almost P600 million in quarry taxes to the province.

In a complaint he personally filed with the Office of the Ombudsman, Panlilio said the Lapids, who are former governors, "took undue advantage of their official positions, authority, connection or influence to unjustly enrich themselves to the detriment and to the damage and prejudice" of the province.

Panlilio said the filing of the charges was part of his "covenant" with the people of Pampanga when he ran and won in 2007.

"Many people asked us what we are going to do with the Lapids when we assumed office, but we told them to leave it to us for a while," Panlilio said in an interview. "But after two years, we have gathered some data and we are doing this out of justice."

Basis

The governor also filed plunder charges against former provincial administrator Nida Arceno and former provincial treasurers Jocito Salanda and Sergio Viloria.

The main basis for his allegation is the P397 million in quarry revenues that the province turned in for 23 months in office.

Panlilio said the province only registered some P121 million in quarry collection between 2002 and 2007.

"The glaring discrepancy between the aforesaid figures was what prompted herein Complainant to study the available records from the province and its component municipalities to determine the actual income of the province from quarry operations during the administrations of respondents Lapids," the complaint said.

The complaint listed 42 reports that the collection during the same five-year period under the Lapids should have been P660 million. Lapid was governor between 1995 and 2004. Mark took over between 2004 and 2007.

"It is no wonder that while they lived in their resort of choice during their incumbency, the Lapids, their families and close aides, including their Provincial Administrator and Treasurers, who likewise held public office, enjoyed lavish lifestyles with, mansion-like houses, luxury cars, sumptuous arts in the metropolis, regular trips abroad, shopping sell and banks," the complaint said.

He alleged that between 2002 and 2007, P660 million were never remitted to the province.

Lapid, in a phone interview, however, did not name people that he thought were behind the move.

As to the supposed ploy, Lapid was referring to the graft case dismissed by the Sandiganbayan in January 2004 or a few months before he joined the senatorial slate of the Arroyo administration.

The dismissal came after the Office of the Ombudsman withdrew the informations, saying the allegations by quarry operators were based on "hearsay."

Another case that Lapid referred to was the complaint of grave negligence and malversation of funds filed by Vice Governor Lilia Guino against Mark Lapid and provincial treasurer Virgel Yabut in March 2007.

In that complaint, Guino said Mark Lapid and Yabut caused injury to the province when they failed to collect between P675.3 million and P1 billion from 2004 to 2007. The case is pending in the Ombudsman.

'Nothing personal'

Mark Lapid did not respond to the Inquirer's call to get his reaction to the filing of the plunder case.

Reached by phone, Panlilio said: "There is nothing personal or political about [the filing of the plunder suit]."

"We want the Lapids and their close subordinates to answer for the unaccounted funds that should have gone to social services," he said.

Fidel Serrano, one of the five respondents and who spoke in behalf of their group, said: "Election is barely a year away and our report comes at a time to discredit the Lapids to get an high gear in the following months especially so because [senator Lapid] has signified his intention to run as governor of Pampanga."

Arceno said the group was ready to respond to the complaint as soon as it received a copy.

Guino said the plunder case should have been filed earlier because the "discrepancies in collections were obvious in the files on records of Governor Panlilio."

Timing

"While I agree that there must be a change, I'm surprised about the timing. Perhaps this has something to do with the upcoming elections," Guino said.

Lubao Mayor Oyette Pineda, Pampanga Mayors' League president, described Panlilio's move as "right and proper."

"Four times, we in the Mayors' League ... Malabanan ... Pilipinas have been fighting first front of corruption at the capitol," Pineda said.

Fr. Bernardo Lozandas, president of the Kapampangan Confraternity, said Panlilio's filing of the plunder case was "consistent with his campaign promises to set right what was wrong in the collection system of the capitol."

"It's long overdue," Lozandas said. Senator Orejas, inquirer Central Luzon

Bacolod diocese opposes entry of GMO products into Negros

By Carla P Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE DIOCESE of Bacolod is opposing the entry of genetically modified (GMO) products into Negros Island, Bishop Vicente Navarra said on Sunday.

In a statement, Navarra urged the government to implement "sufficient fear or favor." Provincial Ordinance No. 007 and City Ordinance No. 405 that ban the entry of GMO products.

Negros Occidental and Bacolod officials should preserve the reputation of Negros as the organic food bowl of the Philippines, he said. "Do not succumb to the pressures exerted by business interest groups."

The bishop said the big names and powerful associations in the province should explain other alternatives to meet their requirements without jeopardizing the environment and the health of the people.

He also called on the people not to be carried away by the "demands and muted interest of profit-hungry groups" and instead, some up with the best method of preserving and maintaining life as originally intended by God.

Navarra also said the high exposure of fertilizers, pesticides and heavy mechanization required by GMO crops had devastating environmental effects.

Since the GMO crops are wind pollinated, small quantities of pollen travel in as far as 0.6 kilometers under suitable conditions and will likely contaminate non-GMO crops, he said, quoting a Greenpeace Southeast Asia report.

Navarra said this could result in the destruction of the natural genetic resources of the region, which would ultimately lead to the destruction of the area's biodiversity.

On claims that the GMO products were safe for human consumption, the bishop said that experiments done on rats fed with GMO tomatoes showed that they had developed stomach lesions or died after two weeks on this diet.

Navarra also defended the claim that GMO would help address world hunger and poverty.

Although GMO products have been in existence for more than two decades, statistics showed that world hunger has not abated, he said.

Baguio puts up centennial trust fund for 2109

BAGUIO CITY—THIS SUMMER capital marked on May 24 its 110th city anniversary on Sept. 1, when it celebrates its centennial as the only Philippine city to be designed and built by the American colonial government.

The countdown was dedicated with less pomp than usual, beginning with the opening of a souvenir shop and ending with the lighting ceremony of a "Centennial Bouquet," an art installation by artist Pya Pinart which enclosed a concrete pine tree on Session Road.

Behind the ceremony, however, the event was highlighted by a trust fund created and dedicated to Baguio residents of the year 2109.

The Baguio Centennial Commission opened the trust account with banker Arnie Pangandiman, the Baguio-based vice president of Metrobank, hoping to meet enough resources that can be tapped by future generations.

The commission was financed by no more than P12 million by the city government and has labored to draw donations and commercial support with little success.

The Centennial Fund has a trust agreement that could not be withdrawn 100 years, said Virgilio Bandoma, centennial commission chair.

THE CITY government failed to light it properly, but the Centennial Bouquet, which was constructed around a controversial concrete pine tree by artist Pya Pinart, is a testament to the 100-day countdown before Baguio formally celebrates its centenary on Sept. 1.

Bandoma said the commission is "the accumulated decision or contributions of any natural person who wishes to be remembered until the second centennial celebration of Baguio City and whose legacy will be considered as the future generations of locals."

The commission said it would send the names of the donors inside a time capsule, which would be opened only on Baguio's bicentennial celebration.

Donors are obliged to donate only up to P2,000. Half of the money will be held in trust, while the rest would be used to complete the centennial projects lined up this year.

The commission said the trust fund would be turned over to the city government with the understanding that it would go to programs benefiting the summer capital based on plans developed by the Baguio Centennial Legacy Foundation, which illustrates a well-managed downtown Baguio.

But city architect Joseph Molintas, a centennial commission member, has been pushing the creation of a think tank to draw up a definitive plan for a future Baguio.

Molintas and several members of the centennial commission have been candid about their fears over regarding the state of the city.

A year ago, the commission hoped to save the centennial venue together experts and civic groups and draft a working program for conserving Baguio's cultural and historical landmarks, write a census history of the summer capital and explore a new urban development plan for Baguio.

Former Councilor Edilberto Tenebroso, who is also a centennial commission member, said the city council also adopted a resolution endorsing designs created by graduate students of the Isabel State University, which illustrate a well-managed downtown Baguio.

But problems continued to pile up in the city. Garbage contains uncollected and the 101-year-old public market could not be modernized because of a 12-year old suit.

Traffic woes, population boom and garbage collection had previously been blamed by the city mayor denounced during the July 1990 earthquake, said Molintas. Manuel Cabreza, inquirer Northern Luzon

VFA works, says US defense chief

By Jocelyn R. Uy

US DEFENSE SECRETARY Robert Gates yesterday said the Obama administration was "quite comfortable" with the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), whose abrogation has been demanded by several Philippine senators and militant groups.

During a four-hour visit to Manila, Gates hammered on the importance of US-Philippine relations, describing it as a wider, strategic partnership.

"The United States is quite comfortable with the VFA ... We think it works and we are satisfied," Gates said in a joint press conference with Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr. at Camp Aguinaldo.

Several senators in March filed a resolution calling for the repeal of the VFA in the wake of a controversy court custody of Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, who was accused of raping Filipino woman "Nicole," convicted by a trial court and later acquitted on appeal.

The VFA has allowed the US and Philippine military to hold more than 100 bilateral activities a year, including the Balikatan exercises.

Gates said the US administration looked at the Philippines as "a large Asian democracy that is an old friend" and both countries "have the potential to be more effective partners together."

Before meeting Izaid and foreign media, Gates and Teodoro held talks for 30 minutes on counterterrorism and humanitarian and disaster assistance.

More important than aid

Teodoro said he and Gates agreed there was a need to build a "strategic dialogue" so that US-Philippine relationship would grow "based on principles."

"The range and scope of our relationship is fundamentally more important than the amount of assistance given by one government [to] the other," Teodoro said.

This year, the United States has allocated $25 million for humanitarian assistance to Philippines.

Gates, who came from Singapore, said the Philippines could expect strong support from Washington to defeat terrorism in the country and neighboring regions.

"I believe we will not relent until this threat has been eliminated," Gates said, airing the same message to about 70 Filipino and US soldiers he greeted after the press conference.

Gates said: "Looking forward, I believe our relations needs to include more in Southeast Asia, for example one [of the Philippines can play] an important role in regional peace and stability."

Dispute over Spratlys

Gates discussed the United States' firm and territorial claims over the Spratly Island chain.

"The US takes no position on those claims, we only urge all of the parties involved to (1) not resolve these issues clearly peacefully," he said.

Later, after seeing off Gates, Teodoro told reporters that they also talked about the kidnapping of Red Cross volunteers and workers in Mindanao and that Gates noted government gains in the battle against the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Teodoro said Gates also talked about "partnering" of US and Philippine military programs "geared toward strengthening the capabilities of both countries."

He said Gates assured the country of continued US military support regardless of who took power after the 2010 national elections. With a report from Marlon Ramos

No thermal scanning for Gates, party

By Marlon Ramos

WAS IT A CASE OF SPECIAL treatment for a "very important visitor"?

Unlike arriving passengers on international flights, US Defense Secretary Robert Gates, his wife Becky and their party of about 40 officials and aides did not undergo thermal scanning upon their arrival for a brief visit yesterday.

Gates and his wife boarded a waiting vehicle immediately after getting off a US government-owned Boeing 747 at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport at around 11 a.m.

Other members of Gates' party were likewise spared from the procedure which the health department instituted to curb the spread of the A(H1N1) flu virus.

An official of the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) said there could have been a violation of procedures on twins flu prevention.

"If you look at it, apparently, you may consider it as a breach of protocol. But we normally head some of our aides for every special visitor like Secretary Gates," said the official, who asked not to be identified for fear of reprisal from his superiors.

Bernard Thompson, US Embassy spokesperson, said there was no need to subject Gates and his party to thermal scanning as a medical team was on board the flight to check the health of all passengers.

"We have coordinated the arrival and all procedures with appropriate Philippine authorities. All personnel in the secretary's party have undergone a health check screening to ensure that no one is entering (the) Philippines with illness," Thompson said in text message.

Coordination mode

US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said the US Embassy had coordinated with the local health officials regarding quarantine procedures.

"We take this issue seriously obviously," Kenney told reporters.

Then Arroyan, Mlan assistant general manager, claimed quarantine officers with mobile thermal scanners were in the airport's check-in area.

He said Dr. Augusto Rillo of the Bureau of Quarantine, told him, quarantine officers were able to take the body temperatures of some of Gates' companions.

"But they were not able to check all the passengers because they immediately left," he said.

Members of the media did not see any quarantine personnel, not carrying mobile thermal scanners.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro Jr., who welcomed Gates, said "quarantining services were done very strictly."

Gates: Nokor may test long-range missile

Francisco Ed

But she said she was hoping the matter would be settled through "peaceful and diplomatic means."

Closer to having A-bomb

Izaid organized the summit to strengthen economic, political and cultural links with the Asean.

But North Korea has moved high up the agenda after it was of a nuclear bomb on May 25—putting it closer to having a working atomic bomb—and then launched six short-range missiles, raising tension in one of its highest levels since the 1950-53 Korean War.

In a move that could cause further diplomatic friction, North Korea will put an end on Thursday two US journalists it arrested on its border with China on several months ago and charged with committing "hostile acts."

A South Korean defense ministry spokesman said the missiles in Seoul had "detected signs that North Korea is preparing to fire an ICBM," or intercontinental ballistic missile.

The missile is believed to be an ICBM with a range of up to 6,500 km, the Joongang Ilbo newspaper reported, citing an unnamed South Korean official.

That would put Alaska within striking range. The Alaskan coast is about 6,000 km from South Korea, while the US West Coast is at least 8,000 km away.

Assault exercises

The exclusive economic country was also reportedly holding its defense and conducting amphibious assault exercises along its western shore, were deployed seizure where deadly naval clashes with South Korea have occurred in the past.

South Korean media have reported that Pyongyang seems to time the launch of the long-range missile for around June 16, when South Korean President Lee Myung-bak has a summit to Washington with US President Barack Obama.

With the launch, Pyongyang could also flouts its cause as UN Security Council attempts to curb its nuclear appetite.

In another sign that a new launch is in the works, North Korea has designated a large area off its west coast as a "no-sail" zone through the end of next month, the Chosun Ilbo newspaper said, citing unidentified intelligence officials.

South Korea faced strong international criticism after its last long-range missile launch, on April 5. The North said the launch was of a rocket intended to put a satellite in orbit. That unofficial version of the Taepodong-2 rocket flew about 3,200 km, crossing over Japan before crashing into the Pacific Ocean.

Gates said he hoped a high-level US delegation led by Washington's special North Korea nuclear envoy Stephen Bosworth—due to meet with the Six Nations, Japan, Russia and South Korea—would help defuse tensions.

"I would rather not presume that we will not be successful in gaining a broad agreement on the way forward," Gates told reporters.

Gates said he would rather "not speculate on what we might do after that." Reports from AP Reuters, AFP and Christian V. Esguerra

Francisco Ed

ators," he said of Madrigal's allegations.

Villar maintained that his company did not benefit from the BSP properties.

Incomplete

"Sunday's statements is again incomplete," Villar said, adding that he would be able to show receipts. "I hope that should the receipts be produced, the senators will resign," he said.

Villar's lawyer, Nolan Galang, later showed to reporters copies of two checks he issued for P19 million in payment for three Ayala Alabang lots covering more than 4,000 square meters.

Galang said the checks were handed to the BSP as it had been agreed upon that proceeds from the lots would be directly given to the central bank.

In the hearing, Madrigal fielded questions from her colleagues on the allegations that she ruined against Villar.

Mike Velarde's lien

Madrigal then submitted her affidavit that Villar had a hand in the realignment of the road exemption project, which she said was originally under the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway Project.

She showed a letter "under the custodianship" of Ambil Project, owned by El Shaddai leader Mike Velarde, to the Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) in 1998.

The letter, signed by Velarde, SM Holdings and Villar's Ayala Properties Inc., informed the TRB that the three developers were submitting the "final C-5 alignment" plan as agreed upon.

Madrigal presented a memo by then Appropriations Secretary Benjamin de Leon to President Fidel Ramos recommending the C-5 alignment proposed by Villar and the other developers.

Another letter was shown by Madrigal, this time dated December 1998, in which then Public Works Secretary Gregorio Vigilar informed Velarde that the developers' proposal for the C-5 realignment was approved.

"They (developers) wanted the realignment to pass their properties so that they could be paid for road right of way," Madrigal said.

Because of the realignment, the government would P1.8 billion that it had already paid for as right of way for properties in the original C-5 road extension plan, she said.

Costly road link

The new realignment, known as the Ayala Pilar-Bumbaran road link, is 2.77 kilometers long and cost the government P700.8 million.

Madrigal presented another document in the project profile from the Department of Public Works and Highways that showed Villar and his wife, Las Piñas Rep. Cynthia Villar, were proponents of the road link.

The document said the "City of Las Piñas and staff of the proponents have negotiated with the owners affected by road rights of way."

In the Las Piñas-Bacoor-Imus road link, Madrigal said 39 lots were affected, 36 of which were owned by Villar's companies, Ambil, Prosperidad and Golden Haven Memorial Park.

She said the road link ended through 25 hectares of land owned by Adelfa and 50 ha owned by Golden Haven.

She also presented Securities and Exchange Commission papers showing that Adelfa and Golden Haven were owned by the Villar couple.

Madrigal said Villar was supposed to get P2.8 billion as right-of-way payments from the Las Piñas-Bacoor-Imus road link. So far, the government has paid Villar's companies P138.7 million.

Budget insertion

She said that when Villar made the P200-million insertion in the 2008 budget, his companies were "trying to collect the additional amount of P862 million from the government for road right of way."

Madrigal said there were Adelfa lots that were sold at P13,000 per sq. m., an amount she described as "unexpectedly overpriced."

She said others lots in the Adelfa subdivision were sold anywhere from P4,000 to P10,000 per sq. m. One of these lots belonged to Rep. Rodolfo Plaza. It was bought by the government for only P4,000 per sq. m.

"So you can see the big difference between ordinary lot owners and properties of Villar," Madrigal said.

Surprising

Madrigal also said another "surprising" thing she discovered was that Villar's company Adelfa had received payments for properties already transferred and thus owned by the BSP.

She said three Adelfa lots had been "reassigned" to Capitol Development Bank, which is owned by the Villar couple. The reassignees were assigned to the BSP after Capitol Bank was ordered closed.

Adelfa, nevertheless, received payments for the lots by right of way according to Madrigal, who presented documents from the Land Registration Authority.

Madrigal said she would continue with her presentation at the next hearing on June 4.

The first hearing yesterday on Villar's involvement in the road extension project came a day before the Supreme Court set a deadline for the Senate to appear in the petition filed by lawmakers ahead the rules that the Senate committee of the whole adopted for the full-blown inquiry into Villar's ethics case.

Bankrupt GM enters uncertain era of gov't ownership

Francisco Ed

one day this thing would go that way," Jim Wangler, a retired GM executive, said of the largest industrial bankruptcy in US history and the fourth largest overall.

"We were so successful," said Wangler, the author of "Glory Days" and a member of the GM team that developed the Pontiac GTO.

A GM bankruptcy is also considered unprecedented as the federal government would inject not an additional $30 billion on to the ailing automaker as it makes its way into bankruptcy court. The US Treasury had already lent the company $20 billion in taxpayers' money.

Underscoring the government's extraordinary role, President Barack Obama planned to announce his support for GM's restructuring strategy at a midday press appearance in the White House, much as he did in April when Chrysler sought court protection.

GM president and CEO Fritz Henderson planned to hold a news conference in New York immediately following Obama's announcement.

Administration officials said late Sunday the $30 billion would help woo GM through its restructuring plan since it didn't have the money to stay afloat if lenders right now. The money would come from what remains of the government's $700-billion rescue fund for the financial sector.

The officials, speaking on condition of anonymity in advance of Obama's public remarks, said the administration expected the court process to last 60 to 90 days.

Leaner company

If successful, GM would emerge as a leaner company with a smaller work force, fewer brands and a rationed dealership force. The company planned to ink with four core brands—Chevrolet, Cadillac, Buick and GMC—and jettison four others.

The company planned to lay off 21,000 employees, about 14 percent of its global workforce, and reduce the number of dealers by 2,600.

"There is still plenty of pain to go around, but I'm confident this is far better than the alternative," Sen. Carl Levin said after being briefed about the developments by the Obama. "It's a new beginning, it's a rebirth, it's a new General Motors."

The government's ownership stake and huge financial injection represents yet another remarkable intervention into the American private sector. The US Treasury has stepped in to help banks, has taken majority ownership in insurance conglomerate American International Group and has guided Chrysler through bankruptcy protection proceedings.

'As soon as practicable'

Despite its sizable ownership in GM, administration officials said the government intended to step out of the company's day-to-day management "as soon as practicable."

The step-to-day operations will be carried out by GM's management. But a majority of the board of directors will change and the administration will have input in helping select the new members.

"Our goal is to preserve strong and viable companies that can quickly be profitable and contribute to economic growth and jobs without government involvement," said a statement issued by the White House and the US Treasury.

Still, it was Obama who ordered the firing of former GM CEO Richard Wagoner a month ago.

And it was the Obama administration that instructed GM to write itself on a point that it could break even by selling 10 million cars a year. Its current break even point is 16 million cars.

The arrangement is likewise fraught with potential conflicts. The Obama administration has proposed tougher fuel efficiency requirements that GM will need to abide by, pumped billions into the auto company's bonding arm and assured consumers that it would backstop GM warranties.

Turnaround executive

GM plans to name turnaround executive Al Koch to serve as its chief restructuring officer to help the company through bankruptcy protection, according to sources familiar with the matter.

Koch, a managing director with Alvarezmsars LLC is a veteran turnaround specialist who helped thrust Corp. through its bankruptcy reorganization.

He will lead the separation of the automaker's assets into a "New GM" and the remaining parts of the company that will form "Old GM."

Once the automaker emerges from bankruptcy, Koch will lead the management team that will wind down the "Old GM" company.

Beyond the bankruptcy announcement on Monday, GM is expected to reveal the 14 plants it intends to close and name the buyer of its Hummer brand.

One of those plants, however, will reopen as a new small car factory. The decision to build the new car in the United States appears to address previous labor and congressional concerns that GM was transferring jobs, putting a small car from its plants in China.

Huge stride

The company made a huge stride toward restructuring on Friday when the United Auto Workers union agreed to a cost-saving deal.

On Sunday, a group of large, institutional bondholders, representing 54 percent of GM bondholders, agreed to exchange their unsecured bonds for a 10-percent stake in a newly restructured company, plus the option to purchase a greater stake later.

GM's fate and the federal government's intervention was scrutinized on several Sunday morning talk shows.

"I think the government put too much money in this," Sen. Richard Shelby of Alabama, the ranking Republican on the Senate Banking Committee, said on CBS's "State of the Union" program.

"We could have let these companies go through the bankruptcy process much earlier, he said."

Bankruptcy process

In a typical bankruptcy process case, the company files a plan of reorganization that must be voted on by creditors. In such class of creditors, the plan would have to be approved by a majority of two-thirds of the claims and a majority of the number of individual creditors who vote.

But the GM case is anything but ordinary, and it appears the company will sell some or all of its assets to a new entity in a so-called 363 sale, under GM, rather than submit a plan to reorganize the old company.

GM stock tumbled to the lowest price in the company's 100-year history on Friday, closing at just 75 cents. In a bankruptcy reorganization, the shares become virtually worthless. AP

SPORTS

End of road for Nadal

Ivanovic also comes to grief

RAFAEL Nadal: This is not a tragedy. It had to happen one day.

Crucial AdU-FEU V-League encounter

By Cedolf P. Tupas

ADAMSON COACH DELLE Fiaste doesn't seem to mind that a victory in the last day of the Shakey's V-League quarterfinals won't offer his Lions any luxury bonding late in the Finalfour.

"You just can't choose your opponent in the semifinals," said Fiaste in the eve of the Lady Tamaraws' clash with the Far Eastern U Lady Tamaraws. "But we will still go for the win."

The winner of the 4 p.m. match at the SSCR Flying V Arena in San Juan will have a bright best-of-three semifinal date with Ateneo Saturday.

The loser will be in a tougher bind against a formidable University of Santo Tomas squad which topped the elimination round and then swept the quarterfinals.

The Tigresses beat the lady dogs for the second time in the conference last Sunday to clinch the top seeding in the Finalfour.

Still, making its first semifinal appearance in the league, will rate guest player Tess Salak, who sustained an ankle injury in the Lady Tams' 20-25, 16-25, 17-25 loss to the ISSC lowers Thursday.

DETERMINED Nadine Bodenburg carries

high into the groundstrokes.

Dizzy Ana also exits

On a bad day for champions, women's holder Ana Ivanovic, who clinched the roadside title slimpy to the fourth game, was bade an early farewell but it almost went unnoticed as Ivis bumped with the news of Nadal's demise.

The eighth-seeded Serb yielded her French Open crown with a whimper when she was outclassed, 6-2, 6-3, by 49-ranked Belgian Yanina Wickmayer.

Sharapova, Murray through

Australia set up a quarterfinal date with champion Ivo Karlovic in the Russian top seed's headlong charge toward a maiden grand slam title showed no sign of missing out of shape when she flattened Anastasia Rodionova, 6-1, 6-0.

Men's third seed Andy Murray was also in good thing form as he strung together four straight winners in the final two-set tiebreaker in the first time by stopping out the challenge of Croatian Mario Ancic, 7-6 (7-4), 6-3, 1 victory.

With No. 4 Novak Djokovic also out, the Britton will have his chances of having three players measure up Federer in the finals.

Maria Sharapova crushed the 2nd eight for the first time since 2008 with a 6-0, 6-0, 4-win over 32 No while Fernando Verdasco bowed to Gonzalez, 6-1, 6-2, 6-4. Reuters

Go, 11, goes world 10-ball bidders

AN 11-YEAR-OLD SENSATION WILL be one of the Filipino bets in the BET. pocket and 9-ball World 10-Ball Championship which begins today at the SM City North Edsa in Quezon City.

Gillian Ga, a prized find from Adelfas Dumdum academy in Quezon City, joins local stars Bubbles Amit, Ms. Rhoda and Mary Ann Bonn in bidding to break through the crack foreign challenge in the tourn organized by Imagine Promotions in cooperation with ZET Enterprises and the Billiards Managers and Players Association of the Philippines.

"I never expected that I would play in the world championship," said Ga, who beat Kirsten Hyun Jeong, 7-5, in the deciding rounds of the second qualifying tournament Sunday.

"I just joined the qualifying tournament to gauge my skills and gain experience," added Ga, a multi-gamble who was introduced to the game at the age of five by father Carlos.

Chicago-based Toni del Rosario, who trains her son in Cameroon, Sussex, will also represent the country with fellow Filipino Ms. Marielle Lorenzo and Jennifer Ramos in the $75,000 championship.

"It's going to be a very exciting event," said Jaquetti "The Black Widow" Lee in yesterday's press conference at the Bay Dome of SM City North Edsa.

Lee is among the favorites in the race for the $20,000 champion's purse.

"It's going to be a smile-open race for the title and I think everybody has a chance, including your 13-year-old girl [Ga]," added Lee, who is back in the Philippines for the first time since losing her highly-managed battle with pancreatic cancer. "She's ready to go."

Other top stars seeking action are Bedtech, Efrenio Pidlaw, considered the greatest female player ever with 72 titles to her credit, Asuncion Chavalmas, Kearney Yim (a young and brilliant lady) Velez.

A total of 48 ace cuties from around the world are vying in the event to be held live on ABS-CBN's Studio 23 and ESPN Star Sports.

TWENTY-TWO of the world's best female pool players gather at SM North Edsa

Maghami tops at Subic; four Filipinos 12th

Final standings

1 Maghami, E. (Iran) Mudgee Cup, 1/6—2; 2. Ga, Gillian (Phi) 1/6—2; 3. Pidlaw, Bangladesh) 1/6—2; 4. Chavalmas, Asuncion (Phi) 1/6—2; 5. Lee, Jaquetti (USA) 1/6—2; 6. Velez, Kearney (Phi) 1/6—2; 7. Yim, Chelsea (Phi) 1/6—2; 8. Ramos, Jennifer (Phi) 1/6—2; 9. Lorenzo, Marielle (Phi) 1/6—2; 10. Bonn, Mary Ann (Phi) 1/6—2; 11. Amit, Bubbles (Phi) 1/6—2; 12. Bonn, Rhoda (Phi) 1/6—2; 13. Hyun Jeong, Kirsten (Kor) 1/6—2; 14. Del Rosario, Toni (Phi) 1/6—2; 15. Lee, Jaquetti (USA) 1/6—2; 16. Ga, Gillian (Phi) 1/6—2

By Ryu Lucero

DEPOSED CHAMPION GRANDMASTER Joyce Gonzales showed Chinese boss notwithstanding Elmer Thong Dizon in the streets and three round Sunday to wind up among the best Filipino finishers in the 2005 Subic Open international closed three rou summit topped by Jessica GM Elinor Gloria Magbanua.

Gonzales studied up 5.5 points, 1.5 more than Magbanua, who drove with Bangladesh's GM Enzo Rabanzo to clinch the title and the $5,000 top purse at the Subic Exhibition and Convention Center.

The victory enabled Gonzales to catch up with a quartet on 3M Rafael Bitoon, IM Julio Catalino Inobrera and GM Mark Paragua as they closed 12th to 22nd places with seven others in the event organized by the National Chess Federation.

Newly crowned Asian Continental champion GM Surya Shekhar Ganguly of India bowed compatriot GM Dibakar Prasad Ghosh in consecutive to settle up with 6.5 points.

Bitoon paddled to Indian 40th seed GM Abhijit Gupta while Inobrera and Paragua ratcheted to a draw with Vietnam's Nguyen Van Huy and Chinese Ni Hua, respectively.

GM Darwin Laylo bowed to IM Joyson Arboleda of India and GM Oliver Dimakiling lost to GM Deshmukh Sagar of India.

Help! Please save Philippine pool

BARE EYE

Ronnie Trinidad

IT DID NOT HAPPEN DURING THE boxing ring, but the usual knockout ensued by an unfortunate pyramid scheme over Colombia Filipino pool hope Lei Li Matdalayong Girl on Sunday was to head the lone ensued be given a downright check-up.

After Dr Lana surrendered and drove to the novel shot performed Ricky Yang from delivering the official check Mom is in the Philippine Open pool final at the SM Megamall.

But Dr Lana was, coach rushes, already out of the match, retained to ring room, after still recovering with terrific unconsciousness.

Oh, the right thing to do was offer assistance and sobriety.

In the second, Dr Lana hardly appeared shaken when he received a full-page check for the $30,000 account up prize.

He even raised and waived the boxing shoes for everybody to see.

In the scene, however, it was not easy to tell Dr Lana, "You fought a great fight, man."

Dr Lana, in losing, may have displayed the ugliest slip by a Filipino seat in an International stretch and he has an excellent home ground.

It was a full-fledged epic release containing chapter verse gift.

To start with, Dr Lana had to climb back hand from the lower bracket.

He was pitted against Yang, who had to topple to salvage the title that happened to be Gonzales's Wall Street. He would be a 3, and Englishman Darren Appleton, the reigning world 10-holding.

The final step to the Gold was a real stepping-up of Dr Lana's form. Appleton from Cebu where videos had obviously been eliminated by the product we he cannot own the title where he

CHUA: Three-in-a-row

Chua steals show in RP Int'l kegfest

JOSEPH DONALD KENNETH CHUA CAPPEL has three games to go with a sterling 300-for-a 687 tally and emerged as the early beneficiary of the Philippine Open and the 36th Philippine International Open Singles Bowling Championships at Muoy's Midtown Bowl in Makati, Manila, Sunday night.

The 17-year-old Chua, who scored a perfect game to last month's 8th Asian Schools Bowling Championships in Hong Kong, shot fanned 181 and 226 before ending his three-game to bring to the event sponsored by the University of Perpetual Help System, Department of Tourism, the Philippine Sports Commission, Asiatec Philippines, Clowning, Goldgate Industries, Pepsi-Cola, The City Bowling Shop, Steel Garden Hotels, Danny's Hotel Town Bowl and Pan Pacific Manila, the tournament's official hotel.

Chua held a slim four-pin lead over TRIAL Prime teammate Jeff Chua (679) and new 20 client of RJ Bautista of SERA-Tenderpro (653), who made history by rolling three perfect games to be eligible for the record MBA Open.

National team ace Apple Posadas tallied lone of 199, 211 and 227 for 637 and surged to the top of the women's Class O singles.

Posadas joined former RP bowler Cecilia Yap (1969) and Rainee Bagaporo's national squad mentor Rita Diaz (1982), both pictured in a PBA Yearbook.

In other early results, Asad Lucio (1969) and Steve Robles (1986) posted together 760 to pace the men's Class D doubles, while the PBA Yearbook duo of Rita (1982) and Yap (1969) led the distaff side with a 679 total.

A total pot of over P2 million is up for grabs in the four-division tournament organized by the Philippine Bowling Congress.

Peping seeks rationale for loss of FEI blessing

By Jane Manaora

JOSE "PEPING" COJUANGCO JR. IS NOT giving up the presidency of the Equestrian Association of the Philippines without a fight.

Cojuangco, the incumbent Philippine Olympic Committee president, has asked the Federation Equestre Internationale to clarify its position confirming the election of party-list Rep. Caston Conrdblanda as the new national equestrian head in a letter sent late last week.

He also asked the FEI to send a representative to the country and conduct a thorough inquiry into the elections, held April 23, which Cojuangco had declared as illegal.

"Your e-mail [dated May 20, 2009] did not state the rationale or basis of your decision," said Cojuangco in a letter he sent yesterday to FEI chief executive and secretary general Alexander Mirtcheff, the same official who confirmed Conrdblanda's election.

"I recently mentioned that it was based on a thorough analysis of documents presented by both parties and the evidences produced."

Cojuangco also asked Mirtcheff to provide a detailed summary of how the FEI arrived at the decision upholding Conrdblanda's election.

"So we are seeking clarification of your decision; we want to know your specific findings of fact and law, and the documentary or evidentiary you relied upon in support thereof," he said.

"We therefore urgently move to be informed of the particular factual and legal basis of the decision to enable us to intelligently prepare our position paper on the matter," added Cojuangco, who served as equestrian chief since 2001 and was elected to head the local Olympic body in 2004.

He said the representative he wants the FEI to send to Manila could investigate "to fully appreciate the prevailing situation."

The POC executive also allows Cojuangco to stay on as POC head since he was elected to a second term last November, when he was still the equestrian president.

"We strongly feel that our position has been exhaustively clarified," said POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta.

COJUANGCO

Angping twits POC on leadership 'anomaly'

By Jane Manaora

AN ANOMALOUS SITUATION.

This was how Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping described yesterday the current leadership status in the Philippine Olympic Committee in the wake of the confirmation of party-list Rep. Cattus Conrdblanda as new equestrian czar/federation.

"With the confirmation of Conrdblanda's EAP presidency the POC now finds itself in an anomalous situation where the president and the secretary general both do not officially represent an NSA," said Angping.

The POC president is Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., who was elected to a second term last November as chief of the organization while the secretary general is former bowling head Steve Hontiveros.

Mariano Enriquez now heads the bowling association.

Dhonnex also noted that the POC first vice president, boxing's Manny Lopez, is not an NSA head and that Frank Rondez, the deputy secretary general, is under fire from a group of parents and coaches who question his legitimacy as swimming president.

Eddy Vargas took over as amateur boxing president last year with Lopez sliding down to the post of first vice president.

Angping, who has been criticized certain POC policies, also noted the outside case (the governance spat) against Abet Jose Jr. and against POC treasurer Julian Camacho, who stepped down recently as president of the Wushu Federation of the Philippines.

Camacho has denied any wrongdoing.

"The POC treasurer is also accused of irregularities in his years handpanel," said Angping. "Now, how can the POC inspire the youth and set an example?"

ORACLE'S Steven Glass (left) does (a visual pantomime from a striking French duke of Pharos in Saturday's Game 3.

Inspired Titans eye Unity Cup clincher today

By Cedell P. Tupas

ORACLE RESIDENCES, AGAIN INTACT AND obviously inspired, gave for glory today when the Titans try to vamp up the PBL-PG Fleet Unity Cup crown against the Pharos Bidang Guards in Game 4 at the Ynares Sports Arena in Pasig City.

The Titans, who replaced the no-see-resisted Hennessy Cognac Boeing Pier at the beginning of the conference, take the first of two cracks at a second consecutive crown for the Milton Romero franchise at 7 p.m.

No franchise has notched up a title streak like this and a victory today would cement the Titans' status as the league's best team of the decade.

Making matters all the more difficult for Pharos will be the return of Mark Barroca and Aldrech Ramos, who missed the last two games after getting ejected during the Game 1 win, and JR Cawaling and Mac Baracael.

The four are members of the PIP development squad which played in Japan last week.

The Titans posted a 66-79 win in Game 3, behind the backcourt trio of Chris Timberlake, Rob Labagala and solidus-rated John Wilson, although coach Elmer Capacio and manager Rudy Hrapan refuse to get carried away by the rout.

"We have a high respect for the Pharos squad. Like I said, we know they still have the makit-or-break-it personality to control the series," said Arapan.

Capacio added: "We can't take them lightly. I'm sure they'll play harder in Game 4."

Pharos coach Carlo Tan believes the series is far from over.

"We lacked the mental toughness in Game 3, but we still play hard for today," he said. "We just have to play real smart."

Pharos took Game 2, 79-72, after Oracle won the opener, 91-72.

Chinese stars RP Open badminton top draws

By Cedell P. Tupas

POWERHOUSE CHINA IS SENDING A crack 29-player delegation, led by former world junior champion Chen Long to the Bingo Bonanza Philippine Open Grand Prix badminton championships on July 1 to 5 at the Philsports Arena in Pasig City.

The Chinese are expected to dominate their competitions from seven countries who have confirmed their participation in the tournament that violates $100,000 in prize money.

Chen will be China's brightest hope in the singles event, where he will be joined by competitors Hou Yonbing, Du Pengyu, Guo Hanni and Lu Qinbing.

The world's greatest badminton nation will be spearheaded by Aung Sun Jun, Wong Sin, Wong Mahlen and Li Hsuehui in the women's singles.

Oliver Dinsten, president of the tournament's main sponsor, Bingo Bonanza, said England, Norway, Germany, Canada, Wales and Malaysia are also fielding entries in the annual event.

Also expected to confirm their stay in the next few days are Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, India, Chinese-Taipei, Japan, Russia and Macau, said Dinsten.

"We have invited many more players outside Asia, so we're expecting a really exciting event," he added.

This marks the third time in four years that Bingo Bonanza is staging the premier championships. The company did not stage a tournament last year because of the Beijing Olympics.

It's all right to use 'focus'

ONE GAME AT A TIME

SEE SATURDAY

B'vista, Martes live up to billing

EDUARDO Buenaventura and Christabel Martes hoist their trophies.

Bedi-Manuel rules JH Invitational golf

PCSO-RP Int'l jungolf tilt comes off wraps at Cangolf

ProGear Golf
Mid-Year Sale

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₱10 = 55 texts na! + 5 texts pa!

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TALK 'N TEXT

Everyone on Life!

Aplus METRO
Editor Alexander S. Lhuillier

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT
Three Grade 1 students of the Banaa Elementary School in Manila simultaneously go on a bathroom break on their first day back at school. MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

COA: Giving of cash gifts to MMDA chair irregular

Money went to favorite charities, says Fernando

By Christine O. Avendaño

THE GIVING OF P1.6 MILLION in cash to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando was "irregular," a government auditor told senators yesterday.

"It's irregular because it's not compliant with rules and regulations," said Ivan Mundo of the Commission on Audit, referring to the cash gifts the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) gave to Fernando on four separate occasions.

Mundo, who is also the MMDA's supervising auditor, made the statement after Sen. Manuel "Bong" Revilla Jr. asked him whether the cash gifts were "illegal or legal."

The Senate yesterday started looking into the matter after Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile's privilege speech last month questioning the cash gifts given to Fernando.

According to Enrile, the MMDA chair received a total of P1.2 million when he celebrated his birthday in 2003, 2005 and 2006. The amount was disbursed from the MMFF's annual revenues as well as the shares of beneficiaries from the proceeds of the annual film festival.

At the first joint hearing of the Senate blue ribbon and public information and mass media, Assistant Secretary Edwinson Peñaco, head of the MMFF finance committee, said that Fernando also received a cash gift of P500,000 in 2004, bringing the total amount to P1.6 million.

Estrada and Revilla learned from MMFF officials that Fernando was given the birthday cash gifts for his role in making the annual filmfest a commercialized success.

The MMDA chair is the overall head of the MMFF.

Exposition Luna, chair of the Film Academy of the Philippines, said the money did not come from amusement taxes but from private funds, specifically from sponsorships.

The senators expressed surprise when Mundo told them that there was no record of the amounts of unconverted taxes collected or disbursed to the MMDA's books of accounts.

Meanwhile, Fernando said he was set to defend himself in the Senate because the cash gifts given to him came from "private funds."

"I don't know why they said it was irregular. I didn't do anything wrong. In the first place, it's private funds I have used [on] making CDR [not illicit] why these are not audited by COA," he told the reporters over the phone.

Fernando said he did not attend the hearing because it was "pointless." He added, however, that he would present himself before the Senate "in due time."

At the same time, he confirmed that he received the cash gifts although he said the money went to his "favorite charities." WITH ALLISON W. LOPEZ

UP legitimate owner of Technohub site based on SC decision, says lawyer

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines yesterday maintained that it owns the property on which the UP-Ayala Land Technohub now built, contrary to the claims of a man who is contesting the university's ownership of the land.

In a statement, the UP administration said the Supreme Court already ruled on the disputes over the 5,000-square-meter piece of property in 2004.

"UP's title over that particular property has been settled by no less than the Supreme Court. The decision has long become final," said lawyer Theodore K. Te, UP vice president for legal affairs.

Te was reacting to the claim of Domingo Cenero that the property in Barangay Culiat, Tandang Sora, belongs to him.

The lawyer said the Supreme Court en banc upheld the university's title over the property in a decision handed down in September 2004.

He added that the high court, through then Associate Justice Reynato Puno, even warned owners and lawyers that they should stop entertaining "speculators intent on seeking further gain and unprincipled lift's titles."

"It is well-just time for courts and lawyers to cease wasting their time and resources on these worthless causes and take judicial notice of the fact that respondent UP's title had already been validated / considered extant by this court," Te quoted Puno as saying.

Te explained that since the Supreme Court had already ruled that Cenero's supposed title to the 5,000-sq m lot was void, "any title arising from such proceedings is also void."

The high court had also noted that Cenero had his title to the property registered 58 years after the university had its title to the same lot registered.

Mandaluyong gov't honors Mendoza for victory at Cannes film festival

By DJ Yap

DIPLOMA OF MANDALUYONG City yesterday honored acclaimed Filipino director Brillante Mendoza for his extraordinary achievement at the 62nd Cannes Film Festival.

Leo Ely, Mayor Benhur Abalos, the city council handed the filmmaker a resolution commending and congratulating him for being the first Filipino to snag a major award at one of the most prestigious film festivals around the world.

Mendoza's film "Kinatay," a story about the violent rape and murder of a prostitute by convicted policemen, won for him the Best Director award at Cannes.

"It's not easy to shoot a film like this one, but thanks to your support, my job became a lot easier," he said upon accepting the citation.

A resident of Barangay Hulo in Addition Hills, Mendoza said he shot most of his films in Mandaluyong City, including "Masang," "Water Child" and "Tirador," which were sent to several international film festivals.

Abalos said his films depict harsh realities about Philippine society and were not "mainstream." But he said he hoped that some day, ordinary Filipinos would come to appreciate his type of cinema.

In his interviews, Abalos said there are "so many Dante Rubi-lustos" out there who needed support from governments to become able to show their talent.

"We should reserve our thinking that there's a great talent out of many and instead begin believing that there are many great talents among us," Abalos added.

DID YOU KNOW

AS OF AUGUST 2008, there were 871 public elementary schools and 213 public secondary schools in Metro Manila.
Cyril I. Ranoberia
Inquirer Research

Declare new ordinance void, SC asked

By Norman Bordadora

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE SOCIETY (SJS) yesterday asked the Supreme Court to declare Manila's City Ordinance No. 8187—which created medium and heavy industry zones in the city, thus allowing the continued existence of the oil depot in Pandacan—null and void.

The SJS also asked the high tribunal to prevent the city from enforcing the ordinance, formally known as Ordinance No. 7327, which was recently approved by Mayor Alfredo Lim.

In its petition, the group represented by lawyers Vladimir Callejo Jr. and Jeremiah Alcantara argued that the ordinance is illegal and unconstitutional, citing the city's charter and the Local Government Code.

"Under the foregoing provisions, it is clear that City Council of Manila can only legislate to promote the general welfare and not to enact measures, like Ordinance No. 8187, that systematically and presumably supersede the health and well-being physical dangers," the SJS said.

"The constitution did not command the enactment of Ordinance No. 8027, and which the Honorable Court upheld as a valid police power measure, have not diminished. The danger of terrorist attacks persist," it added.

Ordinance No. 8027 reclassified the location of the oil depot from industrial to commercial, therefore banning the oil depot in the area.

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UP art exhibit showcases local festivals

By John Paul Rosales

IF THERE IS ANYTHING THE COUNTRY has a surplus of, it's fiestas.

"As a nation, we exhibit a lot under many and have festivals, because it is one of the happy points to rise your identity and to the end of embrace," said Assistant Professor Solomon, a painter, is one of the artists who have been tapped by the University of the Philippines Alumni Association to participate in an ongoing exhibit with the theme "Festivals."

"I've noticed something happy this time," exhibit organizer Romy Castro told the Inquirer in a recent interview.

The exhibit is a follow-up to two previous exhibits, the "1M Medals/100 Years" and "Mothers and Child," part of the state university's centennial celebration.

The UP Alumni Centennial dinner plans to hold another exhibit later this year, this time on Philippine landscapes.

"Our country is a festival country and it often are a part of our culture and tradition so that everyday and the festive mood [are depicted in art] to be appreciated and be passionately," added Jaunelle Bidaligo, one of the participating painters.

Bidaligo said the most popular festivals being featured at the exhibit are the Ati-Atihan, Sinulog, Dinagyang, Pasungbayan and Moriones.

Added Bidaligo: "It's fun to play with the fiesta theme. There are so many bright colors that can be used to express the happy

THE "FESTIVALS" exhibit showcases the Filipinos' love of merrymaking

BOHAY Carlos' "Mga Jak en Roong Bonbon," one of the 69 paintings on display at the Gateway Mall in Cubao, Quezon City

ARNADO Hidalgo's Perspektiba ng Sirkero (Perspective of a Circus Performer) is one of the artworks on display at the exhibit

MMDA targets street vendors near schools

By Allison W. Lopez

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority (MMDA) will go after street vendors hawking unhygienic food to students.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando ordered the agency to implement a prohibition on the vicinity of school campuses to prevent those selling "dirty" food on the streets.

"We have to ban outside sourced food if we want to safeguard the health of our children. We will be strictly imposing this ban against street food to never near the schools," he said.

The Department of Health (DOH) earlier urged the public to stop patronizing unlabeled "unsourced food to children that spoil or are without health permits due to the increase in cases of diarrhea, cholera and other gastrointestinal diseases among children, especially in classrooms.

Fernando said they would ban Kikiam, banana cue, cotton candy, balut, isaw, adidas, barbecue, juice and liquor from being sold near schools.

"These did not undergo proper food preparation. Oftentimes, the vendors do not even bother to cover the food they are selling or to make sure that it is safe to eat," he explained.

"Because dami kaliteratong children sa bus, they should prepare their children's baon [food]. If not, they should tell their children to buy their meal at the school canteen," he said.

Though restaurants and eateries are regularly cleared of obstructions, Fernando said they are the need to intensify their operations against unlabeled vendors due to the DOH warning.

Group sues ex-SolGen

THE ISAIA ALABANG VILLAGE Association (IAVA) has filed class suit against former Solicitor General Francisco Chavez with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board for violating the villages deed of restrictions in building his supposedly P 2 billion-up mansion there.

In a statement sent to the Inquirer yesterday, the IAVA, through village manager Ramon F. Fernandez, said that in line with IAVA's procedures and policy, Chavez was issued several violation notice and his construction bond was not returned to him.

Surprisingly, Chavez filed a case of unfair against pursuant and past members of the IAVA Board of Governors claiming that his construction bond was not returned and connived for their own use. In his complaint, there was no mention of the fact that he had violated rules and simply because he had violated the IAVA Deed of Restrictions," the statement read.

Chavez earlier claimed that the association had approved the construction plans that he had submitted. IAVA, however, said that Chavez did not follow the approved plans and refused to make the necessary changes even after the association repeatedly demanded that he do so.

Barangay watchman arrests Good Samaritan for theft

By DJ Yap

A JOBLESS MAN WHO OFFERED AN ISLAND to a couple slighting from a cab and even helped them unload their luggage was arrested on Sunday night after he allegedly tried to steal their belongings, the Mandaluyong police said yesterday.

Elmelle S. Tindol, 31, a resident of Addition Hills Compound, Addition Hills, Mandaluyong City, was charged with theft after stealing a black pouch from Mr. Adrian Al-Obaid 7 p.m. in front of the barangay hall in Addition Hills.

Based on an investigation by PO2 Jessen Pazara, the theft occurred while Reynaldo A. Mercurio, 30, a cook and Analyn B. Dionio, 25, his partner, were alighting from a taxi carrying a heavy passenger.

Tindol offered assistance to the couple and even helped them unload their luggage from the cab, the investigator said.

"While doing so, the latter secretly snatched out a black pouch from a traveling bag he lifted," Pazara said in his report.

The pouch contained nearly P5,000 in cash and jewelry, the report said.

One of the barangay watchmen saw Tindol take the pouch and accosted him upon confirming that the complainants did not know him.

METRO BRIEFS

Peacemaker killed

8:30-YEAR-OLD man was killed on Sunday morning after he attempted to make peace with a neighbor whom he had been fighting with. Police Senior Insp. Leonardo Gana 54 Purok Dos-passed to Rizal St., Manila, was declared dead on arrival by attending doctors at the said Ateneo de Manila University Hospital. Gana's neighbor was identified as Ferdinand Tiongson, 40, also a resident in Barbosa.

—Jeannette I. Andrade

Jun Custodio; 38

JESSE "Jun" Custodio Jr., a mechanic and independent male detergent, died on May 31 of heart failure. He was 38 years old. He is the only son of the late Imperial Quezon Queen of Fantasia Pat Custodio and Jesse Custodio Sr. of Malabon. Arrangements are still on hold today while his body and his remains are in the morgue. Custodio left behind his fiancée, Ann Abella, mother Lilia Custodio, half-brother Francisco and mother Gloria Pamela Mendoza.

Presidential anticrime agency is a joke

PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO of house at the opening of Barangay Hall in Tanay, Zambales on Monday, which is named by unelected regular Ramon Mitra Jr.

She cut the ceremonial ribbon as Mitra and Rep. Jeci Jalosjos, a trusted friend of Arroyo, looked on.

In other countries, heads of state are seen to be seen with ceremonies, much more a child's play.

Not in Mandaluyong. She even looked proud and was beaming when her photo was snapped with Jalosjos.

One year before breaking news of office, GMA doesn't care to protect her image because there's nothing to protect, anyway.

* * *

A news report said recently Interior Secretary Ronnie Puno had been replaced as vice chair of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC).

What's the big deal?

The PAOCC is a joke. It has for its members a former gambling lord and a pardoned murderer.

The two—the ex-gambling lord and the pardoned killer—took part in sending illegal Chinese aliens inside the Clark Economic Zone that matches its analogies safe debtor with the one of guns.

The only crime that the three

ON TARGET
Antonio Tujo

seem left by those in the know.

Some 56 actions, mainly graduates of the UP College of Law, all had their own ideas on how these celebrations should be immortalized on canvas.

Bidaligo's rendition of the ati-atihan, for example, featured dancers dressed in tribal costumes and liberally smeared on the brown colors of yellow, orange, red and black.

On the other hand, Carlos's "Pagdiriwang sa Pagdaraing" featured a more sombre picture, that of men and women preparing pasta fronds or "palaspas" for Palm Sunday.

Bidaligo pointed out that fiestas in the country are the result of a melding pot of pre-Hispanic pagan beliefs and Catholicism.

"Both are the roots. Fiestas in the country celebrate our ancestors and, and those subjects could be fully explored in art," he said.

A particularly striking and unique piece in the exhibit is that of the beginner's Ana Aliesa Wiled "Sulo ng Kalinga," a cartoon which shows people shrinking, eating and doing bad about and things in the streets.

The homage to idol is also manifested in the exhibit with Rona Macaraeg's "Bilang Isa at Pusa, Bungbong at Bagsakan" which shows a woman cooking lutong ulam under a pair of colored clutch.

Carlos's own floating was depicted several times, specifically on Ambrose Villena Jr.'s painting where three women dressed in costumes from the and groups happily hold up images of the Sto Niño.

Carlos, however, conceded that some fiestas were not featured in the exhibit, like the Obando and some festivals originating from Mindanao.

Yet nonetheless, the Filipinos' penchant for going all-out during merrymaking allows a bold motif from the fiesta's results.

"When you look at these paintings, and at fiestas, you feel like you are in a movie. Even if it's after hours, you enter another world. Then it's back to reality where you'll have to work duties after the fiesta," he said with a laugh.

The "Festivals" exhibit will run until June 8 at the Gateway Mall in Araneta Center, Cubao, Quezon City. Admission is P 50.

METRO
Citizen's Call

Your blog of deliverance and thankfulness for another ray of sunshine.
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- Having a tongue on your shoes outside your bag?
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- Not much to patronize?
- Put up with cussing and blasting neighbors?
- Is there an everyday rain model in your neighborhood?
- Neighborhoodwatch looks on your way to work?

0918-8985586

P.S.

US abortion doctor gunned down in church

TILLER

WICHITA, KANSAS—ONE OF the few doctors in possible late-term abortions in the United States has been gunned down in his Kansas church, and authorities said they have arrested a suspect in the case.

President Barack Obama, who just two weeks ago sought to end in the "demonization" of opponents in the bitter debate over abortion rights, said he was outraged by Sunday's killing.

The gunman killed George Tiller just after 10 a.m. in the lobby of Reformation Lutheran Church. Wichita officials said the 51-year-old man suspected of shooting Tiller was arrested some three hours later.

Long a lightning rod for anti-abortion activists, Tiller, 67, had already been pilloried, bombed and shot in both arms.

Almost 300 people filled a downtown Wichita square during a candlelight vigil for the doctor.

"We've been terrified for him for years," said Anne Spurrier of Belleville, Kansas, who drove more than two hours to attend the vigil.

Many at the vigil blamed radical anti-abortion groups for fostering an atmosphere of hate.

"I'm upset at the anti-abortion people who have allowed the atmosphere to get to this point where someone feels it's alright to walk into a church and shoot an innocent man," said Diane Wahto, who volunteered at Tiller's clinic.

Several anti-abortion groups released statements condemning the killing.

Dhana, in a statement released by the White House, said he was "shocked and outraged by the murder of Dr. George Tiller as he attended church services this morning."

"However professed nor different from an American ever difficult issues such as abortion, they cannot be resolved by heinous acts of violence," he said.

Tiller's clinic was one of only three in the United States that performs late-term abortions, which are performed on females that could be viable outside the mother's womb.

Late-term abortions are legal in Kansas if two independent physicians agree that the mother would suffer irreparable harm by giving birth.

The shooting occurred just two weeks after Obama sought "common ground" in the divisive abortion debate during a controversial speech at one of the top Catholic universities in the United States.

Obama has attempted to defuse one of the most emotive issues in US public life by arguing that while abortion should remain legal, the government should do all it can to limit unwanted pregnancies.

But Obama has angered the anti-abortion movement by reversing predecessor George W. Bush's restrictions on federal funding for embryonic stem-cell research and for family-planning groups that carry out or facilitate abortions overseas. AFP

Suu Kyi lawyers prepare final arguments in trial

RANGOON—LAWYERS FOR Burma (Myanmar) democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi worked on Monday to prepare the closing statements for her trial, a day after the ruling junta accused her of breaking up an unwelcome visit to her home.

The Nobel laureate's legal team said they hoped to meet with her this week as the jail where she is being held, before the prosecution and defense present final arguments on Friday.

The 63-year-old faces up to five years in jail on charges of breaching the terms of her house arrest following an incident last month in which better US duty swimmer John Yettaw swam to her lakeside home.

"We will prepare this week for the final arguments in the case. We are still working on whether we will meet Daw Suu again," Nyan Win, one of her lawyers said also the spokesperson for her opposition party, said.

No hearings are expected in her trial in Rangoon's notorious Insein Prison said. Friday has become a de facto bank in court on Monday as separate charges including immigration violations, a Burmese official said.

On Sunday Sharma's deputy defense minister, Maj. Gen. Aye Myint, rejected foreign criticism of the trial and said Aung San Suu Kyi was being served legal procedures.

"It is not right that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has committed a cover-up of the truth by her failure to report an illegal immigrant to the authorities concerned," he told a security forum in Singapore.

But spokesperson Kyaw Win said he could see consistent in the general's remarks as the trial went ongoing, adding: "The court has not given any decision yet."

A guilty verdict is widely expected as Burma's courts have a track record of handing down tough sentences in dissidents, often in secret hearings.

Kim Ryi said last week that the charges against her were "very-sided."

She accused Burma authorities of failing to provide proper security despite the fact that she informed them of a previous intrusion by Yettaw in November 2008.

Suu Kyi has spent 13 of the last 19 years in detention, mainly in virtual isolation at her home. Her party won Burma's last elections, in 1990, but the result was never honored by the junta. AFP

Doubts raised on ovarian cancer relapse test

ORLANDO, FLA.—IS A PSEUdo that is likely to shake up medical practice, researchers reported here that early detection of a relapse of ovarian cancer with a widely used blood test does not help women live longer.

The finding goes against the common presumption that early detection and treatment of cancer is better. It could force doctors and patients to reconsider the need for the protracted testing that has become an anxiety-inducing but also reassuring ritual for many women who have had ovarian cancer.

Most women who are in remission from ovarian cancer take the test, which measures levels of a protein called CA125, every three months or more frequently. The test can detect the reoccurrence of the cancer months before symptoms appear, allowing patients to start chemotherapy earlier.

But the new study, presented at the annual meeting here of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, found that women who started chemotherapy early based on test results did not live longer than women who waited until symptoms appeared.

"For the first time, women can be reassured that there's no benefit to early detection of relapse from routine CA125 testing," said Dr. Gordon J. S. Rustin, director of medical oncology at Mount Vernon Hospital in Middlesex, England, and the lead author of the study. He said women could safely forgo such testing.

The new study does not rule out the possibility that CA125 may help detect cancer early in a smaller, localized tumor, said Rustin, who is also a consultant to the Medical Research Council, which sponsored the study.

The new study, done in Britain and nine other countries, compared 265 women who began chemotherapy after their CA125 levels began to rise with 264 women who waited to begin chemotherapy until they had symptoms, like abdominal bloating or pain.

The group giving the test began chemotherapy a median of about five months earlier. But the overall median survival for the group was the same, about 43 months from the start of their remission.

Rustin said the explanation was not that CA125 was a poor predictor of cancer's return. Rather, he said, some cancers were sensitive to chemotherapy, so it did not matter if they were treated early. Other tumors were resistant to chemotherapy and would not respond to treatment no matter when it was given. AFP

Brown: MPs should not decide own salaries

LONDON—BRITAIN'S PRIME minister, facing a national uproar over lawmakers claiming lavish expenses, promised on Monday to pursue constitutional reforms including a proposal to take away legislators' power to decide their own pay.

Gordon Brown said he was shocked by the scant resistance that scores of legislators have all those inside political parties last filed claims for a range of expenses from tax advice to swimming pools.

He said the government was considering reforms that would mean lawmakers no longer set the rules about their salaries and expenses.

"There will be no more of the gentlemen's clubs," Brown said on the BBC's hackney Marr show. "Self regulation, closed society. That was a 19th-century idea."

He said he would back a full reform Britain's constitution, and wanted to overhaul the House of Lords—Britain's unelected upper chamber—and set up external supervision of Parliament.

"It is no longer left to MPs to make their own decision," he said.

Brown also said an independent panel would scrutinize all lawmakers' expense claims for the last four years.

Brown said he wanted a code of conduct for lawmakers to be written into the Constitutional Renewal Bill that is due to go through parliament later this year. The bill was meant to strengthen parliament and reduce the role of the Attorney General, but Brown said he now wants use it to set up rules for lawmakers.

He said he also wanted to oversee a committee to study wider constitutional changes, such as a written constitution and reform of the unelected House of Lords.

Opposition leader David Cameron said he wanted Brown to call an election instead of looking at long term measures. He also said he wanted to oversee a system under which lawmakers can be recalled, or fired, by constituents if they are found to have broken the law. AP

'Excessive force' vs sex attack

BEIJING—POLICE in central China said a woman's arrest was for incident involving lawsuit against a sexual assault that led to the death of an activist identified as a local official, state press reported on Monday.

Deng Yuqiao, 21, used "excessive force" when subduing two officials, one of them lethally, after they tried to rape her at a spa in Badong county, Hubei province, Shihua news agency reported.

The case has been widely covered by the national media and is the subject of intense interest on microblogs, where the man reportedly is one of thousands the beach and corrupt lifestyles of Chinese officials.

Deng, a waitress, and Deng Guofu, gained for the alleged May 19 murder of Badong county official Deng Guofu, who allegedly attacked her at the event. Town, spa and harmless but need to rape her, press reports said.

Although she had been detained on suspicion of murder, she was released on bail last week and has not been charged, the report said. Last week, police ruled out that she had been raped. AFP

PMA GATHERS INDUSTRY EXPERTS IN MARKETING CRISIS SUMMIT

To encourage further growth in the business sector, the Philippine Marketing Association (PMA) is assembling industry experts at the Philippine Marketing Crisis Summit on June 16 – 17 at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza Hotel.

The summit is seen as a rallying call for the immediate creation of strategic initiatives and pragmatic approaches to marketing, allowing businesses to survive, and possibly get by growth even in times of economic crisis.

During the two-day event, authorities from different fields will be crowding issues in marketing – from the general situation to sectoral crisis issues. They will also provide strategies and models which delegates can apply in their respective businesses.

During the first day of the summit, Bernardo Villegas, dubbed as the "Prophet of Doom," will be sharing vital information on the Philippine economic outlook in 2008 – 2010. Also, Wy Ong, group chairperson of Campaign & Corp, will profile into the mindset of the Filipino consumer in turbulent times.

Then, as the focus shifts to issues in the different sectors, Austen Chuntrapirom, President of the American Chamber of Commerce, and Claude Habenis, Chairman of the Rizal Association, will convene to provide a road map out of the crisis by pointing out sectors that are bold enough to go against the norm and drive for growth.

Also, Oscar Salfen, the CEO of the Business Processing Association of the Philippines, will be enlightening the delegates on the rise of supply and demand in the business process outsource industry – to answer questions on the sustainability of the BPO sector in the country.

Finally, Press Secretary Cerge Remonde will define the role of government on how to best advance the Philippines and promote the image of the country.

On day two, Dr. Hon Sen Huan, Chairman of the Standing Committee of Nanjing Business School, will reveal the how 7's of marketing and consistent new ideas and concepts to promote action plans for business people who adopt innovations in their line of work.

Next, Joseph L. Sio, Chairman and Chief Marketing Strategist of Mercurio's and Fredrick, will introduce market-driving strategies, which are new marketing tools to win over new customers in times of crisis.

Meanwhile, to support small and medium enterprises, President of the Association of Training Institute for Foreign Trade in the Asia and the Pacific Dr. Luz Baptista-Jacinto will provide the business management questions crucial for SMEs. With this, she believes that the SME's chances for a successful recovery from the fall for their nations will be significantly answered, and will empower them to compete side-by-side with corporate businessmen.

On the other hand, Ramon Lopez, Executive Director of the Philippine Center for Entrepreneurship, will attempt to change the mindset of Filipino entrepreneurs – encouraging them to see the positive elements that can be seized in times of crisis.

With a shot of mindset in entrepreneurship, Dave Guerrero, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of BBDO Guerrero, will show how this can be done through beyond the box advertising – using the law of attraction to capture both the attack of mass and issues of mind.

Dr. Nenita Garcia, Dean of the College of Business Administration of Lyceum of the Philippines, will share corporate data on the most admirable companies in local and global economies and show these companies were able to achieve this status through effective use of operations management.

Finally, Chase Santos-Concio, President of ABS-CBN, will be discussing how the entertainment industry transcends a sort of solace to viewers, both local and abroad, who are in need of comfort from retail and stress brought by woes about the economic meltdown.

Up to 500 slots are available for delegates, and interested parties may register until the last day of the summit itself. The registration fee of P 10,000 includes attendance to all technical sessions and meals.

For inquiries and other concerns, you may contact the PMA Secretariat through these numbers: 634 4880, 634 3232, 638 1401, and 926 7705 or you may send them a fax at 638-1401 or 634-0232. You may also email them at pmamarketing@yahoo.com and surveys@pldtdsl.net or visit their site: www.philippinemarketing.net.ph

EXCLUSIVE
OPENS TOMORROW AT GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS

"A rock-solid biopic with a foolproof rise-and-fall storyline..." — VARIETY

"Terrific performances, powerful soundtrack & eye-catching visuals..." — THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

"Managed to stun, unsettle & move me..." — NEWSWEEK

Glorietta Greenbelt

MTRCB Rating: Parents Guide 16 (R-16)

The WORLD

Editor Lorraine B. Queen

US, Cuba to resume talks in sign of thaw

SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR—SECRETARY of State Hillary Rodham Clinton brought signs of a thaw between the United States and Cuba to Latin America on Sunday.

Cuba scuttled the Obama administration that it was ready to resume talks on migration issues and to negotiate direct postal service between the countries for the first time in decades. It also agreed to cooperate with the United States on counterterrorism, drug interdiction and hurricane relief efforts.

The decisions, conveyed to the State Department on Saturday in diplomatic notes, represent another step in the gradual unfreezing of relations under the Obama administration, after nearly 50 years of a trade embargo that many in the hemisphere say has contributed to unfairness.

"Greater conversations," Clinton said, "can lead in a better, freer future for the Cuban people. These talks are in the interest of the United States, and they are also in the interest of the Cuban people."

Clinton is in El Salvador for the presidential inauguration on Monday of the leftist leader Mauricio Funes, who has said he will restore diplomatic relations with Cuba, leaving the United States as the only country in the Americas without such ties.

On Tuesday Clinton plans to attend a meeting in Honduras of the Organization of American States. Members of the group want to move to readmit Cuba, which the organization expelled in 1962, citing its alliance with "the Communist bloc."

Clinton has headed off calls from Cuba to be offered membership until Havana moves to accept the group's democratic principles. On Sunday, she reiterated that the United States would oppose the efforts of several Latin American countries to immediately reinstate Cuba.

Cuba, for its part, has said it has no interest in returning to an organization that the official newspaper Granma referred to recently as "that decrepit old house of Washington."

The measures announced by Cuba on Sunday came in response to overtures from the United States. President Barack Obama began his outreach to Havana in April by lifting restrictions on travel by Cuban Americans, and on the remittances those living in the United States can send home.

In May, the Obama administration signaled its willingness to reopen a higher-level channel with Havana by proposing meetings on migration. Those efforts appear to have gained momentum after a cordial meeting in April in Trinidad on which Obama told Latin leaders that "the United States seeks a new beginning with Cuba." AFP

Indonesian model recounts escape from 'abusive' Malaysian prince

MAHENDARA Oddia Pisor, 17, is kissed by her mother as she arrives at her residence in Jakarta on May 31. —AP

JAKARTA—A TEENAGE Indonesian model has returned to her family in Indonesia with tales of abuse, rape and torture at the hands of a Malaysian prince, after her dramatic escape with the help of Singapore police.

Mahendara Oddia Pisor, 17, told reporters she was treated like a sex slave after her marriage last year to Tengku Temenggong Mohamad Fakhry, the prince of Malaysia's Kelantan state.

Her mother, Dessy Pujiatia, said she would press charges against the 31-year-old prince, and blamed the Malaysian and Indonesian governments for trying to cover up the alleged abuse.

"The things I've been afraid of never revealed to be true. Mawdora has suffered physical abuse. She's got several ruptures on her chest," Pujiatia said on Monday.

The Malaysian government had ignored her pleas for access to her daughter and had blocked her from receiving the women's passport, which, she said, Indonesian Embassy had said that Mawdora was free with her (new husband).

But the young woman—a well-known socialite in Jakarta—said her life as the royal palace involved a "daily routine" of rape, abuse, torture and unconsented drug injections that made her vomit blood.

She said she was usually held under guard in her bedroom at the palace and was injected with tranquilizers whenever she complained.

"I would sometimes cry all day because I said it has left an impact on me," she told reporters in Jakarta on Sunday, after escaping the royal family during a trip to Singapore over the weekend.

"Sexual abuse and sexual harassment were like a daily exercise for me, and he did that every time I did not want to have sexual intercourse," she was quoted as saying in The Jakarta Globe.

"I could never drink a normal meal—I could do such things," she said, adding: "Some parts of my body were cut by a razor."

I've been treated like an animal. I'm like his property and I was in his room and whenever he wants to play with me he just goes into the room and plays with me. I'm like an object."

The teenager—whose fairytale wedding to a prince was captured in the magazine of Indonesian socialite—said she would be tortured if she did not appear to be happy when she attended social functions with Fakhry.

She said she secretly called Singaporean police and pleaded for help after the royal family took her to Singapore when they accompanied Fakhry's father, Sultan Ismail Petra Ibrahim, for medical treatment.

"The police told Fakhry that his would be held in jail if he did not let me go. He just could have me against my will in Singapore and I knew I had a chance to escape," she said.

The model once vowed in being among Indonesia's "100 Precious Women" said she escaped her guards by pushing the Singapore hotel elevator's emergency button.

They were reluctant to claim her because they knew the scene would be captured on security cameras.

She blasted the Indonesian Embassy in Malaysia, saying: "They made it easier by telling his, saying that I was fine while I was suffering in Malaysia."

A spokesperson for the Indonesian foreign ministry insisted the embassy had done everything it could to help Mawdora and said the government would assist her if she wanted to file charges against her husband.

But Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said the government would not investigate the allegations.

"I think this is more of a personal matter. To date we have not been dragged into it, so we want to leave it as it is," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia's royal rulers used to enjoy immunity from criminal and civil charges but the privilege was removed in 1993.

Mawdora has already filed for divorce, her mother said. AFP

Air France jet with 228 on board missing over the Atlantic Ocean

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL—AN AIR France jet carrying 228 people from Rio de Janeiro to Paris lost contact with air traffic controllers over the Atlantic Ocean, an Air France official said on Monday (Sunday) amid hourly hopes a search mission will be underway soon.

Air France Flight 447, an Airbus A330, was carrying 216 passengers and 12 crew members, company spokesperson Brigitte Barrault said. The flight left Rio on Sunday at 7 p.m. local time.

The plane disappeared about 565 kilometers northeast of the coastal Brazilian city of Natal, near the archipelago of Fernando de Noronha, a Brazilian Air Force spokesperson said. The Air Force began a search on Monday morning near Fernando de Noronha, he added, speaking on condition of anonymity in keeping with Air Force policy.

The region is about 1,500 miles northeast of Rio.

An official with France's emergency agency said the contact with the plane was lost at 02:00 GMT Monday (10:20 a.m. in Manila). The official was not authorized to be named according to agency policy.

Barrault said the airline installed an information center at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport for the families of those aboard.

"Air France regrets to announce that it is without news from Air France flight 447 flying from Rio to Paris," she said. "Air France shares the emotion and worry of the families concerned."

The flight was scheduled to arrive in Paris at 09:15 GMT (5:15 p.m. in Manila), according to the airport.

Airbus declined to comment until more details emerge.

France's minister in charge of transport, Jean-Louis Borloo, said there was a "real presentiment at this hour" about the fate of the aircraft.

"We can fear the worst," he said on Europe 1 radio.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy expressed his "extreme worry" and sent ministers to Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport to monitor the situation. AP

Boyle rushed to clinic after talent show defeat

LONDON—SCOTTISH SINGING sensation Susan Boyle was rushed to a London clinic with mental health problems after missing a check record on a talent show, media reported on Monday.

Boyle, whose wanting singing voice made her an unlikely global star, was taken by ambulance to the Priory Clinic in north London on Sunday accompanied by paramedics and police when she started acting strangely at her hotel in the British capital, The Sun newspaper reported.

The news comes hours after she suffered a surprise defeat last Saturday in the "Britain's Got Talent" show, when she was voted into second place in a public vote behind urban dance group Diversity.

In a sign of how big the story has become, Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he had spoken to the show's judges about Boyle on Sunday because he "wanted to be sure that she was OK," he told ITV television on Monday.

Fellow-X Factor judge Dannii Minogue said: "I'm sad that Susan was voted into second place in a public vote behind urban dance group Diversity.

In a sign of how big the story has become, Prime Minister Gordon Brown said he had spoken to the show's judges about Boyle on Sunday because he "wanted to be sure that she was OK," he told ITV television on Monday.

Fellow-X Factor judge Dannii Minogue said: "I'm sad that Susan was voted into second place in a public vote behind urban dance group Diversity.

"She has been seen by her private GP (doctor) who supports her decision to take a few days out for rest and recovery," it said in a statement. "We offer her our continuing support and wish her a speedy recovery."

The Priory, which says on its website it specializes "in the treatment of mental health problems," could not immediately be reached for comment.

It is part of an exclusive chain of private clinics which is known for treating troubled performers including Amy Winehouse and Pete Doherty.

Even though she lost, Boyle was still reportedly poised to earn up to eight million pounds ($11 million) in the next year from a record deal, a book about her life and even a film. AFP

Pakistan lifts curfews in Swat Valley

MINGORA, PAKISTAN—THE military lifted curfews on Monday in seven towns in the Swat Valley in a further sign of confidence that its military offensive against the Taliban there is making progress, though violence flared elsewhere.

The order will allow thousands of people caught in the battle zone to leave their homes and search for food and other supplies that have dwindled, often to nothing, in the past month of fighting.

The loosening of restrictions posed new dangers for residents, however, with one saying he saw soldiers open fire at civilians in Mingora room as they emerged from hiding places, apparently because they suspected they were Taliban.

"I saw two people who came out to ask for relief goods and they opened the fire on them from the mountains," said Gohar Ali, one of many Mingora residents who had been trapped for weeks in his home with a curfew was lifted briefly on Sunday. Army spokesperson Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas said he was unaware of the incident.

The military said in a statement that daytime curfews were lifted on Monday in the Swat towns of Saidu Sharif, Mingora, Barikot, Khwaza Khela, Matta and Mingora and in the nearby district of Shangla.

Pakistan launched an offensive against militants in Swat and surrounding districts a month ago after they violated the terms of a ceasefire and advanced into a region close to the capital, Islamabad.

The Swat offensive has earned US praise as troops have regained large swaths of the region from an estimated 4,000 militants. The fighting has forced up to 3 million people to evacuate, threatening a humanitarian crisis. AP

Millvina Dean, last Titanic survivor, dies

LONDON—MILLVINA DEAN, the last remaining survivor of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, died in a care home in England on Sunday, media reports said. She was 97.

Elizabeth Gladys Dean, known to friends as Millvina, was only 9 weeks old when the liner hit an iceberg in the Atlantic Ocean on the night of April 14, 1912, and sank killing 1,500 people.

She survived after being bundled up in a sack and carried to safety. Her mother Georgette Eva and brother Bertram also made it, but her father, Bertram Frank, was among those who died.

Dean died in a private nursing home near Ashurst in the southern English county of Hampshire, according to the BBC and Britain's domestic Press Association news agency. Staff there refused to comment late Sunday.

Dean's family had boarded the Titanic at Southampton, heading for a new life in Kansas where her father hoped to open a tobacconist shop.

Born on Feb. 12, 1912, Dean was the youngest passenger on board. At the time, RMS Titanic was the most luxurious, most technically advanced and largest passenger liner in the world.

She was dubbed "unsinkable," but it took just two hours and 40 minutes for her to disappear into the icy waters of the Atlantic after striking an iceberg at 11:40 p.m. on April 14.

Dean was taken back to Southampton with her family after the disaster and did not find out that she had been on board until she was 8 years old and her mother was planning to remarry.

According to enthusiasts' website Encyclopedia Titanica (ET), Dean worked for the government as a cartographer during World War II and then for an engineering company.

She told reporters that it was not until the wreckage of the liner was found in 1985 that she suddenly became a celebrity, taking part in documentaries and giving media interviews.

Dean was invited to complete her family's ill-fated journey to the United States in 1999 aboard the QE2, and accepted, although she turned down an offer to attend the premier of the movie "Titanic" because it would be too upsetting. AFP

DEAN in photo taken on April 11, 2002. The supposedly "unsinkable" Titanic set sail from Southampton, England en route to New York on April 10, 1912, and met disaster on April 14, 1912, after hitting an iceberg with the loss of 1,500 lives.

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Editor Raul D. Marsalo • Assoc. Editor Carina S. Mariano

BUSINESS

Gov't rejects high bids for T-bills

Anemic GDP growth affects investor appetite

By Nonoy M. Dumlao

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY MANAGED TO RAISE ONLY HALF of its target of P7.5 billion from the sale of treasury bills as investors sensed the government's openness to higher yields, following last week's announcement of anemic economic growth for the first quarter of 2009.

Treasury bill yields inched up across the board in yesterday's auction, but the Treasury rejected bids that sought much higher rates.

Interest on the benchmark 91-day bills went up 7.1 basis points to an average of 4.203 percent from 4.312 percent during the last auction.

The 182-day bills booked 4.171 percent, plus 7 basis points higher than the previous 4.504 percent.

The yield for the 364-day debt paper went up 5 basis points to 4.934 percent from 4.684 percent.

Investors tendered a total of P13.5 billion for the bellwether issue, the same amount on offer, but the Treasury accepted only P7.03 billion.

For the six-month issue, buyers tendered P2.81 billion against the offer of 2.5 billion, but the Treasury awarded only P1.01 billion.

For the one-year bills, investors tendered P5.93 billion against the offer of P5.5 billion, and the Treasury accepted only P2.515 billion.

The government enacts a total of P4.21 billion or about 57 percent of the P7.5-billion target.

Wednesday's "changes are still underways for almost the same as previous auction's rates paired to rates in the secondary markets," said National Treasurer Roberto R. Tan.

Asked to describe the behavior of buyers during yesterday's auction, Tan said the market was waiting whether the government would accept higher rates because of the "not-so-positive" announcement on the growth of the GDP (gross domestic product) in the first quarter.

Last Thursday, the National Statistical Coordination Board said the Philippine was teetering

MORE B2

Petron unit buys stake in thrift bank

By Doris C. Dumlao

EXPORT AND INDUSTRY BANK IS SELLING its orderly unused Cebu board thrift bank unit EIB Savings Bank Inc. in face real estate developers, one of which is a subsidiary of the country's biggest oil refiner Petron Corp.

Export Bank disclosed yesterday that its board of directors has approved the sale of the thrift bank unit to New Ventures Realty Corp. and Las Lucas Development Corp.

New Ventures is listed as among the subdivisions of Petron that is engaged in acquiring and developing land. An Inquirer source confirmed that it was the same Petron subsidiary that was among the buyers of EIB Savings, in bidding for petroleum firm's diversification into banking. Las Lucas, on the other hand, is owned by Petron's retirement fund.

The price consideration for the transaction, however, was not disclosed. Neither was the equity sharing between the two buyers.

"It was the intention of previous management to engage in micro-finance, hence the acquisition of EIB Savings in 2004. Present management is focusing its efforts in doing business with the provincial rural/by market and/or the corporate sector where credit risk is much better and the profit potential is more lucrative," the bank said in its disclosure.

EIB Savings' table is the province of rural

PETRON B2

SMIC's first bond issue gets warm reception

By Doris C. Dumlao

SM INVESTMENTS CORP'S P9B seven-year retail bond debut recently as nearly an P10 billion has received a warm reception from the bond-financing community.

The five-year portion is expected to yield 7.75-8.25 percent a year and the seven-year bonds, 8.6-8.9 percent, said Jolinito Francisco, president of lead underwriter BDO Capital and Investment Corp., during an investors' briefing yesterday.

SMIC is set to hold another roadshow in Cebu and Davao this week to broaden the distribution of the retail bonds. But this week, Francisco said the P5-billion initial offer has been "almost fully underwritten."

He said that fixed-rate retail bond issue was the "first of many bonds that the SM group will offer." The pricing will be finalized by Friday.

The bonds are offered in a minimum of P20,000 and multiples of P10,000 thereafter. The bonds will be

7-yr component oversubscribed, says underwriter

offered from June 8 to 18 and are expected to be issued by June 25.

"The way the demand is going, my suggestion [to investors] is to invest on five years. The seven-year [portion] is already oversubscribed," Francisco said.

He said the SM group has reduced the minimum investment requirement to P20,000 to make it affordable for millions of SM customers. While demand for qualified institutional investors was strong, he said the group reserved more retail participation in the offering.

The offering will mark SMIC's debut to the local bond market and the first retail bond issuance within the SM group, which in the past has mostly taken the private placement route in raising funds for its listed companies.

The price guidance is in line with the SM group's expectation of a spread of 150-200 basis points over comparative government securities.

The bonds obtained the highest credit rating (Triple A) from Philippine Rating Services Corp., the only local credit rating agency in the country accredited by both the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Triple A is the highest rating assigned by Philippine to obligations that are of the utmost quality with minimal credit risk. It is also assigned to issuing companies with an extremely strong ability to meet its financial obligations.

SMIC plans to use proceeds of the bonds for various expansion projects of its subsidiaries and for general corporate purposes.

Defying gravity

MARKET RIDER

Dave Sonnera

STOCKS AGAIN OVERCOME PRICE pullbacks last week despite the market's lingering technical hazards of various patents. More interestingly, stock prices rendered basically yet another upward movement as week's end.

There was no doubt that the trend which first developed in early-March like last Friday, along with the continuing rally on Wall Street, considerably influenced the outcome of trading last week. But one could not help wonder if there was more to it because value turnover breached the P3-billion breakout benchmark of the current market, with net foreign buying outpacing foreign selling transactions.

PSE investors contest poll

The runoff for the Institutional Stock Market Challenge was last May 30. The final lineup of successful participants will be made tomorrow, June 1. The contest will begin on June 8.

If you are one of the hopefuls, hold on and don't fail to check your e-mail boxes for official notification before sundown tomorrow. If not, you have to immediately acknowledge receipt. Failure to respond within 24 hours may lead to your replacement. It's best to use single fingers reason for one to sale or buy in the stock market, it is the failure to take immediate action.

The selected participants will be given a welcome treat by the Philippine Daily Inquirer. The system is a day of fun. The contest rules sweetener are where the capital market is not here to earn directly be beneficial to ordinary people like you and me.

Displaying full support, the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) has sweetened the pot, so to speak. For the top three winners, they will receive from the PSE the following: a figurine replica of the raging bull that has characterized the recent weeks market, plus P20,000 worth of stocks for each to actually start realizing a pipe dream of "trading for a living and/or in financial freedom".

In this connection, the Market Rider has decided to increase the number of players in the contest to seven from an original five.

The virtual contest has attracted the interest of an overwhelming number of people of diverse professional backgrounds, sex, age and personal status around the country.

Certainly, the stock market is not solely for people with theoretical or practical financial background. Some years ago, the paraplegic and legally robbed of Wall Street were startled by the stunning performance of a 14-year-old kid from a dusty town from where the Oracle of Omaha (Warren Buffet) lived.

There was also this plain housewife who outperformed Wall Street's wiggins. We have people in the medical practice, engineering field, retired teens, pedicab, sports and amateur with successful careers who at the same time was to become market winners—some additionally managing the investible funds of scores of people.

Then, we have stories about the abnormally rich and literate investors and professional traders who lived from day to day the story of every factor of great fun and leisure without losing productivity.

Buckle up then for the coming adventure. Even by just following the contest, you will be able to pick up invaluable lessons on how to beat the market. It will also lead you discover your investor profile.

"That's do what you dare to dream."

Bottom-line spin

The market was up another 72.62 points week-to-week with the PSEi at 2,989.31 last Friday. This happened even as our senior government officials were poised on spinning that the economy was on the brink of recession on account of the report issued by the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) that economic growth slowed to a 10-year low of 0.4 percent in the first quarter. This was way below the estimated 2.1 to 4.1 percent target of the government.

Down Economic Product (GDP)—the amount of goods and services produced in the country during a particular period—grew 2.9 percent in the last quarter of 2008.

Seen from this conflicting sign and from fears that the recession in the US will not disappear at year's end, the market might just give back a great deal of what it has gained.

However, with how the market has performed up to last week, it is undeniably headed to close the price gap opened at 2,420 way soon. Based on the market's mechanic, stock prices are heading to a pre-another significant upward advances. Therefore, stocks are set to post new record highs. Hence, as the market is turning exciting but certainly becoming a game only for the brave and daring, the technical trading call is "Buy on weakness."

Swag at PSE modernization

Just recently longtime director but now Comer only of the bourse, Wilfrido Ang—having been eased out in the last board election—resigned from all the committees he is involved in, including the crucial committee that is for reviewing PSE's new computer re-wiring modernization program.

Reelected board member Nilda Gobing was said to have also resigned in total support of Ang. Both presidents were said to have serious differences with PSE management on how to proceed with the computerization.

The story is completely different when one hears the version of the other side—"It is plain old boy's club rivalries against the turnover of the last board elections." If we want to believe the cynical bees, Ang is still burning from suspicions that PSE management "conspired" to tilt the vote in favor of stockbrokers and he became the "sacrificial lamb." Ang's "innocent act" also denied brokers' representation to less than what they were entitled to, to, "paving members ang mga brokers, kasi dun's namely a difference matter," said one broker-friend when asked to give light on the matter.

(You may reach the Market Rider at marketriderinquirer.com.ph or directly at dennisonsy@yahoo.com.)

Alsons net profit up 12% in Q1

By Amy R. Remo

ALSONS CONSOLIDATED RESOURCES, Inc. said its net income rose 12 percent to P334 million in the first quarter from P298 million a year ago.

Alsons chief financial officer Lolo B. Ynares Jr. reported that revenues grew 2.3 percent to P568 million from last year's P554 million, but gross profit slightly dipped 0.7 percent to P360 million from P363 million.

Despite posting higher numbers this quarter compared to last year, Ynares said all actual figures were lower than the company's forecasts.

Ynares said the company had expected net income in the first quarter to hit P310 million, gross profit, P524 million, and revenues, P655 million.

He said Alsons Consolidated's projected volumes of energy to be dispatched during the quarter fell due to lower usage of electricity and water by its industrial customers.

Another factor he added, was the adjustment in price indices used in computer tariff rates of power companies.

However, the company remained confident it would still post a modest growth in revenues this year to P2.64 billion from P2.63 billion in 2008. It also expects to record a higher net income of P630 million in 2009 from P482 million last year due mainly to planned cost efficiencies.

Petron . . .

Homepage B1

page and miscellaneous loans, with the overall objective of providing accessible capital, personal investment or credit to long- term credit facilities to developing markets, and to extend lending products and services on competitive rates for entrepreneurs. The bank was incorporated in August 2004, with its head office at the Cebu South Road, Barangay Subasta, Talisay, Cebu.

"It's possible they are diversifying into banking. Bobby (Roberto) Ongpin doesn't own a bank yet," one analyst said.

Ongpin is the key local partner of British fund Advantex, which last year bought Saudi Aramco unit of Petron and likewise acquired the government's stake in the oil refiner. The Advantex group then sold to San Miguel for P10 million an option until December 2010 to take over the company that controls Petron.

Export Bank is itself in talks with potential investors, including the Nieberger Bind Commercial Banking Corp., for a possible takeover of the commercial bank, to which sought a ordinary suspension of shares trading at the PSE starting May 15.

Philippine Stock Exchange

As of June 1, 2009

Currencies

June 1, 2009 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1	1.000000	47.4650
Japan	Yen	100	0.010000	0.4802
United Kingdom	Pound	1	1.615100	76.6610
Hong Kong	Dollar	1	0.129000	6.1220
Switzerland	Franc	1	0.939000	44.5690
European Union	Euro	1	1.414000	67.1100
Singapore	Dollar	1	0.690000	32.7500
Australia	Dollar	1	0.780000	37.0200
Bahrain	Dinar	1	2.650000	125.7600
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	1	0.266000	12.6200
Kuwait	Dollar	1	3.440000	163.2700
Indonesia	Rupiah	100	0.000100	0.0047
Thailand	Baht	100	0.029000	1.3800
Qatar	Riyal	1	0.275000	13.0500
Canada	Dollar	1	0.815000	38.6900
China	Yuan	1	0.146000	6.9300
Norway	Krone	1	0.168000	7.9700
Sweden	Krona	1	0.134000	6.3600
Denmark	Krone	1	0.190000	9.0200
India	Rupee	100	0.021000	1.0000
Malaysia	Ringgit	1	0.284000	13.4800
Taiwan	Dollar	1	0.031000	1.4700
New Zealand	Dollar	1	0.642000	30.4600
Sweden	Krona	1	0.134000	6.3600
Switzerland	Franc	1	0.939000	44.5690

Source: Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP) Rates - May 29, 2009
* Selected units of Bankers Association of the Philippines' survey. ** Peso Exchange rate as of May 29, 2009. *** BAP's Dollar rates

Moody's: RP needs miracle to avert recession

BSP puzzled by mismatch in finance, economic data

THE HIGHER MISTAKE. NO Filipino will dig into the latest batch of economic data to find any explanation as to how the economy managed to avoid negative growth (-0.5) 4 percent in the first quarter despite the expansion in bank lending.

Normally, the BSP said, a steady rise in bank lending should sustain, if not accelerate, the growth of the economy.

"We still study the National Income Accounts and review all relevant statistics," Cyd Arnaiz, managing director at the BSP's policy subsector, told the Inquirer, referring to the set of data that details the economy's performance. "The puzzle for us is why the rise in bank lending did not translate into sustained economic growth."

According to an earlier report by the BSP commanding heights, extended by commercial and universal banks grew 18.9 percent to P2.39 billion in March from the level of the same month last year.

Nestor Espenilla Jr., deputy governor at the BSP acknowledged that the latest bank lending growth enabled a slowdown from over 20 percent recorded last year. However, he stressed that the double-digit growth should have still supported a more decent gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate than one registered last week.

"Lending growth is still very strong. An over 18 percent rise in bank lending is still fairly high, so credit is not the problem. First, there seems to be a disconnection because, usually, strong lending should be reflected in the GDP," Espenilla said.

GDP, the most common measure of how wealthy an economy is, is the sum of the values of goods produced and services rendered within the country in a given period.

Short of casting doubt on the reliability of the National Income Accounts, Espenilla said data that determine GDP are "softer" compared with the more solid figures gathered by the central bank for purposes of reporting bank lending. This is because it is more difficult to record production of all sectors of the economy than collate data from the banking sector.

Michelle U. Remo

Credit-rating agency says economy may surpass 1998 trough

By Michelle U. Remo

WITH GROWTH IN PRIVATE consumption having turned anemic and the level of investments still lackluster, the research arm of Moody's Investors Service said it would be practically impossible for the Philippines to escape an economic contraction this year.

As such, the country would likely join most of its neighbors that have already dipped into recessions later this year.

"In terms of avoiding an annual contraction this year, I'd say it would take a miracle or some major upward revision to GDP [gross domestic product] data (trading things weren't actually that bad in the last two quarters)," Nikhilesh Bhattacharya, associate economist at Moody's Economy.com, told the Inquirer.

According to Moody's Economy.com, the Philippine economy's performance this year would be even worse than that in 1998, when it contracted by 0.6 percent following the onset of the East Asian financial crisis a year earlier.

By the definition widely used locally, a recession refers to two consecutive quarters of negative annual growth rates in the economy, as measured by the GDP. The GDP, on the other hand, is the most common measure of how wealthy an economy is. It is the sum of the values of goods produced and services rendered within an economy during a given period.

The decade-low, 0.4-percent GDP growth in the first quarter prompted concerns among economists that this could signal the country's impending plunge into a recession this year. Arroyo administration officials have tried to allay these fears, however, noting that growth in the first quarter, although measly, remains positive. They added that the second quarter is expected to be better than the previous one.

SAVING THE ISABELA RAINFOREST
Oscar M. Lopez of First Gen Corp. and Grace Padaca, governor of Isabela province, seal an agreement to protect and rehabilitate the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park. First Gen and Energy Development Corp. and the provincial government of Isabela will establish a 200-hectare reforestation project within the park for endangered local tree species.

DOE expects 8 power plants to go on-stream

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY EXPECTS eight new power plants to go on stream and provide the three main grids a combined capacity of over 1,800 megawatts (MW).

These committed power projects are expected to address a looming shortfall in power supply in the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao grids, over the next few years.

Committed power projects refer to those that have complied with the necessary permits and clearances of various agencies and concerned local governments, and in the process of financial closing.

As of March 2009, data from the DOE showed that the SouthWind Power Development Corp.'s five-wind power generating units in Bangui, Ilocos Norte could be expected to contribute 0.25 MW to the Luzon grid.

This project, which is already on its second phase, has been ready for operations since August 2008.

The DOE also expects GN Power Ltd.'s 600-MW coal-fired power plant in Subic, to go on stream by 2011.

For the Visayas grid, the government-owned Power Corp.'s coal-fired power facility in Concepcion, Iloilo contributing 200 MW by 2012, while the coal power plant project of Aboitiz Philippines Corp. and SPC Power Corp. in Toledo, Cebu will put in an additional 300 MW by 2011.

In Mindanao, the DOE expects the Giga-watt de Oro Electric Cooperative's Cabulig facility to contribute 6 MW by 2010, and Medco Minahan Inc.'s hydropower project to add 42.5 MW this year. KRC's Mindanao 5 geothermal project in Cotabato will also put in another 50 MW to the grid by 2014.

Appeals court asked to halt Meralco rate increase

A CONSUMER GROUP HAS SOUGHT a review of the order issued by the Energy Regulatory Commission to allow the Manila Electric Co. to increase its distribution charges, saying the decision was "unfair."

In its petition for review filed with the Court of Appeals, the National Association of Electricity Consumer for Reforms (Nasecore) sought the annulment of the ERC order issued on April 13, 2009.

The ERC raised its distribution rate last month in an average P1.227 per kilowatt-hour following ERC's approval of the performance-based ratesetting methodology for determining rates that the utility would impose.

Before the order was issued, the power distributor's average rate stood at P5.37 centavos per kilowatt-hour.

This was the first time Meralco was allowed to raise its distribution rates of charges since 2003.

Nasecore said in a statement that the ERC's grant to Meralco of a fresh increase would further aggravate the hardship of the public and make Meralco's profits "further swell at the expense of the consuming public."

The consumer group, which had in the past won several cases against Meralco, said the ERC tends to highlight more the positive effects of the rate increase in terms of improved financial resources on the distributor, without regard to its "injurious" effects on consumers, especially in terms of higher, "unjust and unreasonable" electricity bills. Amy R. Remo

Tax and field

BREAKTIME

Comrade R. Bawal III

WITH ABOUT A YEAR LEFT IN HIS TERM as the Department of Finance, Secretary Margarita Teves is pushing for tax increases on cigarettes, liquors and beverages.

He, in fact, appeared before the House ways and means committee last week, which conducted public hearings on the tax measures.

The DOF recently asked the House of Representatives to raise the excise taxes on "sin products," because—as Teves put it before the House ways and means committee—this rate administration of Gloria is needed to raise more revenue.

What's on Teves behind the proposal to raise the excise taxes on those products.

Sure, Teves, with one year to go, sure, the Arroyo administration could still cover its eight consecutive years of poor finances.

Tax lesson, she bombards of billions of pesos in budget deficit!

Come on, to solve its money woes in one year, this administration would need a miracle—or, at the same degree of evil as the "Legacy" casket.

Why are they kidding, really, making it appear to the public that more taxes are actually for our own good?

Since when, boss?

* * *

SO FAR, in 11 years, the excise taxes on those products already went up by 11 percent as the start of the year.

The companies that were affected by the increases, actually, had no choice, because it was proportionated to the current excise tax law—Republic Act No. 9334.

Aside from the recent increases, the law requires another increase in 2011.

Therefore, DOF under Teves, in office, wants to do away with the law.

You see, the law also provides for a four-tier tax structure on tobacco products, ranking the existing cigarette brands from "low" tax rates to "premium" tax rates.

The existing law automatically puts new cigarette brands at the "premium" level for excise taxes.

The DOF, under Teves, for whatever reason, wants to change all that. All these!

Perhaps not surprisingly, the DOF also wants to remove the tax tiers. The DOF is asking the House for a single rate on all kinds of cigarettes.

Hmmm. Let me see. I think such a measure will be good for foreign cigarette companies that are trying to penetrate the Philippine market.

You know, companies like British-American Tobacco, or BAT.

* * *

AUTHORS of various bills entering the DOF proposal, led by Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez, appear to be giving up on their bills.

For one, the House may be pressed for time. The DOF bill is a controversial tax measure. And we all know that the elections are just around the corner.

No wonder, Teves had to make a personal last-ditch appeal to the House ways and means committee.

But the congressmen from tobacco-producing provinces (Ilocos region, for instance) were not about to give in to his advances.

Secretary Speechless Teves, whose statements from the north, his hometown, was rather vocal in criticizing the DOF measures as "anti-tobacco farmers."

Tobacco farmers' groups, in fact, streamed the hearings in full force, registering their objections in the House committee.

What I am saying is, well, this republication of the DOF on new taxes is not going to be a walk in the park for the core administration.

There is a political price to pay.

* * *

AND SO it puzzled some congressmen why Teves insisted on getting the House to approve the tax increases.

It even inspired Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas, a member of the House ways and means committee, to make a statement of "insensitivity" to the needs of some less million people who were dependent on the tobacco industry.

For one, the congressmen did not believe that the tax increase would really mean higher revenue for the government.

Worse yet, it would backfire and kill the tobacco industry.

Teves, based on figures submitted by the DOF to the committee, the excise tax collection in the first quarter of 2009 fell by almost 26 percent.

In absolute figures, it meant a drop of more than P2 billion.

I don't know, but P2 billion can already build more than 200 classrooms.

AS I SAID, the excise tax rate increased by 11 percent as the start of 2009. Could it be the reason then for the drop in collection?

Teves insisted before the committee that tobacco products, as "sin" products, were not "price sensitive."

What he meant was, even if this rate adjustment is shoot up the excise tax rates to another phase, the public would continue to smoke.

But the DOF figures presented to the committee showed otherwise. They showed a "price elasticity factor" of -2.15 for cigarettes.

What it means was, for every 10 percent increase in the price of cigarettes, demand is expected to go down by 2.15 percent.

In other words, people would buy less local tax-paid cigarettes. They would rather buy smuggled cigarettes. Or something like that!

SEC opposes Permaplans' alternative payment mode

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SECURITIES AND EXchange Commission (SEC) yesterday reiterated its opposition to an alternative settlement package proposed by pension plan provider Permanente Plans Inc., which recently filed for court-assisted rehabilitation citing difficulty in servicing its obligations.

In a statement yesterday, SEC Secretary General Lakbini said the commission had not agreed to Permaplans' alternative mode of settling its obligations. He also clarified that there was no freezing of the company's trust fund assets, which the pension plan provider claimed to be the cause of its "state of paralysis."

Before filing for rehabilitation, Permaplans proposed to pay off plan holders who wish to terminate their plans based on a 60:40 payment arrangement, whereby 40 percent would be in cash and 60 percent in assets such as memorial lots.

Lakbini said the SEC issued on March 30 a letter calling the attention of Permaplans on complaints received from plan holders that it had been offering an unacceptable alternative mode of settling its obligations.

He cited section 12.1 of the Pre-Need Rules which stated that "no pension plan contract ... shall be amended or modified without prior approval of the commission."

Permaplans' violation of the provision was the reason why SEC suspended its dealer's license, Lakbini said.

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BUSINESS

Reforms urged ahead of global upturn

By Abigail L. Ho

Foreign chambers seek action to attract additional investments

THE GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO UNdertake drastic reforms in various sectors if it wants to take advantage of the signs that the economy has started to recover from the worst global recession in decades, according to the Joint Foreign Chambers.

The group, in a presentation to the media yesterday, offered recommendations focusing on eight key areas that needed reforms.

"We urge Philippine leaders ... to develop an ambitious vision for the country, to undertake a program of bold reforms, to target double-digit economic growth, to aggressively remove obstacles to competitiveness and to develop vigorous strategies that give more FIL-Spines better opportunities in working abroad," European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines president Michael D'Aboville said.

He said there was no better time than now to implement reforms, as the Philippines' net FDI was expected to reach only around 25 percent of the almost $5 billion that was registered in 2007, or approximately half of what was posted last year.

Among the reforms that the group is pushing for is the passage of key pieces of legislation and amendments to existing laws.

John Forbes, American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines legislative counsel for chair, said among the bills that need to be enacted this year were the Department of Information and Communication Technology Bill, the Investment and Incentives Code, the Pre-Need Code, the Real Estate Investment Trust Bill, the Reproductive Health Bill, the Retail-Glad Price Policy Bill, the Freedom of Access to Information Bill and the Revised Rural Corporation.

"The more of these bills you will pass, the better for the country," he said.

D'Aboville also said the government should revise the existing Foreign Investment Negative List to make it "less negative." "Restrictions on foreign equity in utilities, real estate and retail, as well as the imposition of special fees and fees on foreigners should also be revisited.

"Progress in reducing barriers to foreign participation sends the message that the Philippines is seriously preparing for free trade negotiations with [the European Union and the United States], and would facilitate the success of such negotiations," he said.

Budget deficit target may be raised yet again

By Reuters M. Domingo

FINANCE SECRETARY MARGARITO B. Teves yesterday hinted at another upward adjustment of the government's budget deficit ceiling, following last week's report of a more-than-expected economic growth for the first quarter.

"The government remains committed to increased and more effective public spending to help stimulate the economy," Teves said in a statement.

GDP refers to the total value of goods and services produced and paid for within an economic territory over a given period.

A low GDP growth mandates to less revenues for the government which, in turn, means that it may need to borrow more to support its spending program.

For 2009—when Malacañang intends to jack up spending beyond the national budget in an effort to stimulate the economy—the government originally set a target deficit of P46 billion, after it notched its goal of attaining a balanced budget.

This has since been revised to P182 billion, P177.2 billion, and most recently P199.2 billion.

As of end-April, the budget deficit has reached P113.9 billion, which Teves said was still within the program of P320 billion for the first semester.

When asked whether there would be yet another change in the target, if details with the government's revenue, is team say they do not see one so far, but conceded that the issue be discussed in the Development Budget Coordination Committee's meeting later this week.

Yesterday Teves reiterated that amid the impact of the global financial crisis on the local economy, it is important for the government to spend more on basic social services and infrastructure.

TEVES

RP, Korea seal $600-M agri deals

By Riza T. Olchondra

TWO KOREAN COMPANIES HAVE committed a total of $600 million for biofuel investments using sugarcane and jatropha as feedstock, according to the Department of Agriculture.

In a statement, the department said that Environment Planet Co. Ltd. (EPCL) and Eco Solutions Co. Ltd. (Eco) have each signed an agreement to develop biofuel feedstock farms in the Philippines.

"These agreements were among the accords forged between Manila and Seoul during President Arroyo's recent visit to Korea," it said.

Under a memorandum of understanding with the Agriculture Department, EPCL will invest $300 million to develop 40,000 hectares of sugarcane land in Pampanga, Tarlac, Pangasinan, Bataan and Zambales.

EPCL is throwing in another $125 million to put up a distillery with an integrated power plant, with an annual capacity of 120 million liters of ethanol a year.

Meanwhile, Eco will invest $175 million to develop 100,000 ha. of jatropha plantations in General Santos City and Sarangani. The feedstock will be processed into biodiesel in a refinery with a capacity of 60 million liters a year.

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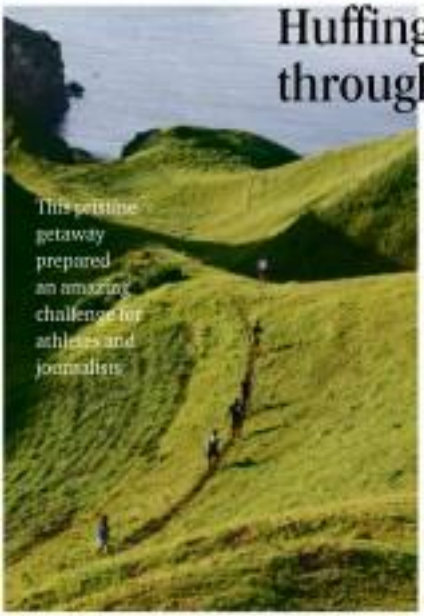
PLDT NEGOSYO BOOST

Editor Thelma Simon San Juan

LIFESTYLE Wellness

Huffing and puffing our way through Batanes' rich heritage



THE PICTURESQUE landscape of Batanes made the race a truly breathtaking experience. PATRICK SANTOS/INQ

By Anna A. Jamboro

THE EARTH SHOOK momentarily as 24 participants raced across the rolling hills to Batanes in the "Amazing Race" two weeks ago.

Organized by the Batanes Eco-Cultural Tourism Industry, the "Amazing Race" was a series of challenges especially designed for the urbanites to appreciate the unique Ivatan cultural heritage.

The mental-state athletes paired with city journalists, each pair accompanied by two young hosts, endured the blistering sun to clear challenges ranging from planting sukay (camote tops) to first steps across the scenic countryside.

Planting sukay the traditional way, a staple food for centuries of the Ivatans, is a complicated skill to learn. Hefty cuttings must be inserted between the middle and third fingers, the stems and leaves facing the body before being shoved into freshly dug soil. Cover the cuttings in clay enough leaves just out from the soil, then step on the soil so it would yield big crops.

Robert Bautista, acting provincial tourism officer of Batanes, said the race showcases seven-odd Ivatan tradition and culture. "This way, our participants will also learn, firsthand, the Ivatan culture," he said.

In this province, where cows are sighted at almost every turn, herding is a way of life. In a scene hour away from sunset, participants, none of whom had never owned cows in a new before, saw the steep downhill of Nagsing Hills, dragging the beast by the rope. When the cows had been safely pegged down to rolling, participants grabbed a piece of wood formed nearby and raced back uphill in surrender it to the next.

Burial site

Dubbed "race" (instead of "race"—which was what it actually was—the "Amazing Race" had everyone trekking to the Nakanmuyo ancient burial site, where boat-shaped burial markers in boulders are found. The

HUFFING ON

GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS

JL LIPAN

BY JEG LABRA

PUGAD BABOY

BY PH. JUNIOK

DICK TRACY

LOVEBUNNIES

BY ELIZABETH CHEREPAS

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PANGILINAN

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

TULOOK

BY MARK COLL

BEN

BY DAVID, SHELTON

ATOMO AND VIBOY

BY LYRA GARCILLANO

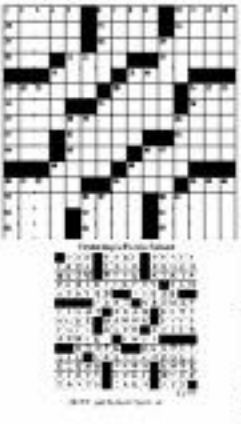
BIKO MACHINE

BY MARK ABRAN

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DANE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Type and program of www.conceptis.com

Answers to previous puzzle

9 8 3	6 7 1	4 2 5
2 7 6	4 5 8	9 1 3
1 5 4	2 9 3	8 6 7
7 3 9	5 4 6	2 8 1
8 6 5	7 1 2	3 9 4
4 1 2	8 3 9	7 5 6
6 9 7	1 8 4	5 3 2
3 4 1	9 2 5	6 7 8
5 2 8	3 6 7	1 4 9

The best weight-loss strategy for bride and groom

COMBINE regular physical activity and a sustainable eating plan.

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

IT HAS BEEN A PHAGocyte of busy women preparing for their wedding to eat less and neglect exercise. If you resort to starvation, you'd regain the weight during honeymoon.

The best weight loss strategy combines regular physical activity and a sustainable eating plan even after the wedding.

Early preparation

Your wellness program should be planned at least four to six months before your wedding.

■ Set your lifestyle goals. How much weight do you want to lose? If you have 10 lb to lose, you should target at least two lb every month. If you have 30 lb to lose, better start sweating it out as early as now so you can slim to an average of five lb per month. Avoid overdieting and using weight loss pills.

■ Set a budget for wellness. Allocate at least five to 10 percent of your budget for your wedding wellness program. Enroll in a health club or buy exercise equipment which costs less than P5,000.

■ Hire a credible fitness trainer who is professional to coach you every week or every two weeks on your fitness routine and exercise programs so you can get better results.

■ Spend time for exercise. Delegate the wedding tasks to your friends and family or get a wedding coordinator.

■ Start your weight training program or you can get a toned body especially your arms and back. A full body weight training can be done 30-45 minutes two to three times a week. Include all exercises for the back, chest, shoulders, arms, core, buttocks and thighs.

■ Start a journal on your food intakes and physical activities. Combine your wedding notebook with the wellness journal so you are always reminded about your commitment to health and fitness.

Two to four months before:

■ Ask your fiancé to exercise with you at least once a week so you will get the chance to talk more about your lifestyle goals. This fitness bonding is important to both of you will avoid the "after wedding" weight gain.

■ Include fitness and wellness issues in your wedding registry. This is a good idea for your outdoor getaway like a bare for hiking and camping.

One to two months before:

■ Shop for sensible sizes of clothes as your reward. This will motivate you to continue your wellness program for maintaining sweet and svelte bridal.

■ Treat yourself to the spa. Enroll in a yoga class with your fiancé to learn how to breathe properly.

A few days to two weeks before:

■ Do the control and meet acquaintances of physical activity you can do at home or spread your college like walking or jogging.

■ Avoid sassy and dirty foods. Eat enough rest so you can physically and mentally prepare yourself for your sweet awakening.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

One's deficiency is strong motivator for success

INSIDE OUT
CATY CHAVIANO

COMPLETE THE SENTENCE: When I lose _____, I will be _____. Most people will include the words: money happy ending; complete, nutrition; fulfilled, healthy, grateful.

A profound truth is attained in the understanding of it cannot be achieved unless it is looking in our lives because a strong motivator. This is called "deficiency motivation," which eventually leads to discontent simply because it is based on what is wrong and missing, rather than growth and change. "Deficiency motivation is motivation". This powerful line states "you are a work of art—complete but not yet finished".

A mind shift requires unconditional trust which opens you up toward giving, serving, loving and thought of the inwards. When we envision movement and development in our lives, we become motivated by dreams. Suddenly our perception of ourselves as our channel is used, but unchecked or envious. Our potential will now become reality. And this is how soul well-being is described in three key elements:

Knowledge: What to do for ourselves and why to do it.

Skills: How to do it, which process, a special way of thinking, a routine discipline in living.

Desire: The want and drive to do it.

Example: After she was diagnosed with cancer, a woman's worst fear advice, "I will do everything it takes to get my health back. Whatever it begin?" This is deficiency motivation because the person is based on not wanting to die; a compromise for lost health. What is wanting home more if the wounds do be sad? She acknowledges a lack instead of seeing herself as already complete soul. If there are health challenges. Simply put, it's a spiritual decision. Let's reword her question and change it into an affirmation. "I will live with this cancer but I will live my life fully today." There is nothing wrong with the connection to one's self.

Correcting a deficiency is wrong. But what is right is to explore it with a new vision. "When we are motivated by goals that are deep meaning, by dreams that need completed, by pure love that needs expressing, then we truly live life."

Prescription

Whether your challenge is physical, emotional or mental, embrace a purpose now nourishing choices to your heart.

Benefits: Healing of body, mind and spirit.

Like prayer

According to a progress-minded priest, making wishes in life is much like praying. The most effective prayers are the ones that God likes to hear best. Don't test the mind of God, for true, honest, point and prayerbooks. Faith combined with great faith are powerful allies.

Health booster

For clarity of mind, try this. Take a combination of two protein bowls per meal or drink protein mix. Avoid fried foods, alcohol, carbonated drinks, refined sugars.

Drink this concoction:
2 cups milk
2 tbsp fresh kefir (product of local replacement)
2 tbsp virgin coconut oil
Blend with one frozen ripe banana or any frozen fruit.
(For ingredients, call Herbal Wellness at 725-3078.)
Affirmation: "I am perfect in nothing to be finished."
Love and light!

Mag focuses on kids' health

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE FOR parents to jump-start their children's health and address new issues like overweight, aches and blood sugar "spike and crash" by choosing the right foods. Read "Growing Pains" and "Move to Avoid Kids' Blood Sugar Spike and Crash," in the May/June issue of the Healthy Options Lifestyle bimonthly.

The issue also serves as a good primer on wine appreciation. Available free to consumers of Healthy Options stores, with branches located at Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Pasteur's Supermarket, Makati City, Festival Supermall, SM City North Edsa, SM City Manila, SM Megamall & SM Mall of Asia, Rustan's High Street and Tomas.

Huffing and puffing our way through . . .

From page C1

only other cabaret known to have bouncing grows on the Vikings, told Tobi Morton, lead organizer of the race.

Then, on Holgate Street's Boulder Beach, the next day, teams retraced the boat-shaped hauled markers from 22 rocks, weighing no less than 15 lb each. The challenge: rocks were tied down the beach while the monkeys hauled the win up onto the dirt road.

As always, the fastest and most accurate execution wins the challenge. Accuracy means hauling two much larger rocks on both sides of the boat, with the rest of the "smaller" rocks stacking upright instead of lying flat on the ground. A boat must have the sea, for it is believed that it will transport the soul to the after-life.

The day's final challenge was to return the rocks back to the beach. And what quicker way to accomplish that than to throw the rocks back where they belonged? After throwing many the first four or so rocks, everyone feverishly wished they knew how to throw them.

Another memorable challenge was the racket (regatta) activity in the town of Upper. In Bonaire, where everyone rides through noticeable livelihood, there is still a racing tradition of bicycle-like, three-wheeled vehicles called *bakinpoes*. Ismael Martis, organizer every family member—sometimes even the community—is to a specific task in, say building a mountain of bones.

A two-sloped roof frame of lime and stone with thatched region wood, the *simakurpoe* house has cobbles wall that does the wind. A reverse during violent typhoons. Typically a thick cupboard bed lasts up to 10 years.

In the challenge each participant must run from a make-believe site of a *simakurpoe* house up to the end of the road, and run back down to the *simakurpoe* house carrying the large stack of cupa on one shoulder.

One of the female oldest residents, Ms. Ines Estrella, proudly called Lida Florentia, joined the "Amazing Race" Teams interviewed her about the town's historical facts.

Mental challenge

Teams also had to avoid challenge at Mount Cole, co-named since the cold when nobody can be in the area for 24 hours without supervision by its owner. For this leg, teams must compile 12 different items amounting to exactly \$278.

Other challenges included teaming up lighthouses to take photos of lighthouses, Ms. Ines, Bruce Church and group photos with the lighthouse and their door in background.

RACING: Leonard runs to finish with runner-up Ines Estrella, partner.

RACE FINISH: Marchers during the second (regatta) activity in Upper.

[BEING: Leaves world wakeboarding champion and cinematographer Johnny, high-flyer Rafael Francisco, also a world wakeboarding champion.

winning to the headwaters and more. Stones were also required to find teams taking down pieces of banners that also required running down and up hill to get a clean shot.

The final challenge was in Diaz, a hiking part. Teams raced along a coastal trail on a hill toward the Mountain of Youth in Youth a hill. Once on location, teams dove into the fountain to retrieve members written in small

robots—and master Gist matched their respective team members. The Fountain of Youth is believed to make people not only younger but healthier as well.

Team Stares took home the first prize, with paraglider Jenna Lampe in lead athlete. Team Wolfstone was second place with world champion paraglider Randell Rautenbach, "dead" in second place champion Kelly Peterson's Team Jones was third place. Other teams were Team Rhapsody, with world wakeboard champion and mountain biker Aruna Lopez; Team Submerg, with swimmer Bryson Mackinnon; and Team Upright, with mountaineer Benedikte Berbergren.

Teams were named after different towns in Bonaire.

"This is a unique way of introducing and experiencing Bonaire. It's been an exciting event and hopefully next year, we will be capable of hosting an even bigger Amazing Race," said Bonaire Gov. Sebastian Cornelissen.

The "Amazing Race" was co-sponsored by Seak Bikinet's new air ticket to Bonaire.

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How science and religion affect our beliefs

THROUGHOUT MAN'S RECORDED history there were periods of radical shifts in thinking and beliefs brought about by new discoveries, creating a major change in our consciousness.

I have often wondered how these changes in consciousness, or paradigm shifts, happen. How can certain facts not once suddenly and they were not accepted right away. In fact, there was somebody who said that every new idea is first deemed to be true, then ridiculed or dismissed as nonsense, and later as embraced as self-evident truth.

Let me give a few examples. There was a time when people believed that the world was flat, that if you sailed to the farthest end of the ocean, you would fall into an abyss. That was accepted as fact.

But then a nonconformist Portuguese sailor named Christopher Columbus thought otherwise, and said that the world was round and not flat and that if you sailed straight ahead you would end up exactly where you had left. Many people ridiculed him except a few scholars who believed in him and supported his efforts. The rest is, as they say, history.

This single act in 1942 created a paradigm shift in man's thinking and consciousness, but the idea that the world is not flat was not accepted as easy. It took some 300 years after Columbus' encouragement the world believe orthodox science to accept his terrible revelation.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime I. Ibanez

How mankind's knowledge of the earth's shape changed from round to flat for a period of several hundred years, I do not know, because the early Greeks knew all along that the earth was round and even calculated its radius and circumference in the third century. How did such knowledge get lost? Still, mainly because of religious dogma and fanaticism.

When religious dogma and subjective thinking prevail over science and objective reasoning, erroneous conclusions are bound to be drawn.

Take the belief and the religious dogma during the Middle Ages (aptly called the Dark Ages) that the Sun revolved around the Earth (known as the Ptolemaic Theory). The Church maintained that the "unmovable" Earth, not the Earth was "ridiculously" it was considered to be heresy to believe otherwise.

But then a relatively unknown astronomer named Galileo Galilei, using a crude telescope, said: "The Church was wrong" it is the earth that revolves around the sun."

This was considered by Church of Rome to be an outright blasphemy and therefore he was arrested by the Holy Inquisition and forced to retract his unorthodox and heretical views or choose to suffer death by being burned at the stake. Fortunately, Galileo had enough sense to retract his statement to save his life, though he did not agree with the Church's stand on the matter.

Centuries after he was almost burned to death, the church in 1992 apologized to Galileo and admitted their mistake. Galileo was correct after all, said Pope John Paul II. The Earth revolved around the Sun. Heaven later on the Heliocentric Theory of Copernicus.

It takes a lot of time indeed before a new theory or idea is finally accepted as true, especially if that idea goes against commonly accepted beliefs.

2 Marys

Pope Leo I in the fifth century declared in a homily that Mary Magdalene was a sinner, although there was no evidence in the Bible that she was. The Pope replaced three Marys in the Bible and made a composite statement that the 3 Marys referred to Magdalene.

Centuries later, in 1969, the church admitted Pope Leo's condemnation of Mary to be a big mistake and even declared Mary Magdalene a saint. But still, many modern priests refer to her as a sinner and human penitent although she never was proven to be one.

It takes time for a paradigm shift in consciousness to occur. It needs someone with critical mass for us to accept a new idea before it is generally accepted.

The same goes with the flat Earth theory versus Geocentrism. It will take time before it is accepted by the Church and the majority of the people.

But who, in the end, can tell whether something is true or not? Is it the scientist, the priest, or Church group? Or is it the collective experience of the people that should be the final arbiter? But if it's the Church, they would take be wrong, for many say they were wrong in believing the world was flat and that the sun revolved around the earth.

The same thing will happen to the theory or belief in reincarnation. It will take a long time before it is understood by the majority of the people. Only when science finally proves it by sheer preponderance of evidence, will it be accepted by the majority. But the time may not be too long before reincarnation is finally declared to be scientifically true.

Note: The next Fundamentos, Harmonic & Reincarnation seminar will be on June 13, 1-7 p.m. at No. 106 Petrus Plaza I Cond., 106 Jalapa St., Greenhill, Makati City. Tel: 725-9911/8804-No. 813-9890; e-mail: inner@manila.pldt.com

Hypermarket opens in Mandaluyong

RESIDENTS OF MANDALUYONG AND Manila can now enjoy one-stop shopping convenience with the recent opening of SM Hypermarket along Shaw Boulevard, just across Jose Rizal University.

Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos, SM founder and chairman Henry Sy Sr. and Felicidad Sy led the ribbon-cutting ceremonies. SM Supermarket president Hermes T. Sy, SM Investments vice chairman Teresita Sy-Coson, SM Hypermarket EVP Robert Steven, Mngr. Hong Lu and Fr. Arnan Pascual joined them.

Top executives from some of the country's well-loved brands also graced the occasion.

ACTRESS, singer and model Kyla Cruz

SM HYPERMARKET executive vice president Robert Steven welcomes Unilever Food Solutions managing director Zafer Ipinez and King Basin of Diamonds Bowl.

(ABOVE) Henry Sy Sr. with Unilever chairman Fernando Fernandez, SM Hypermarket president Herbert Sy, TV star Marian Rivera and Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos. (Left) Mandaluyong City Mayor Benhur Abalos, Henry Sy Sr. and Felicidad Sy lead the ribbon-cutting ceremonies, joined by Mngr. Hong Lu, Fr. Jesus Prof. Herbert Sy, Teresita S. Coson, Robert Steven, and Josh Sto. Manila

Unilever Food Solutions managing director Zafer Ipinez, Unilever chairman Fernando Fernandez, and owner of Diamondiz Bowl, Greg Garde. It was also a memorable occasion, with the presence of Marian Rivera, Kim Chiu and Judy Ann Santos.

The 14-storey SM Hypermarket is the chain's 14th branch and its first standalone store. With its wide selection, convenient mall services and ample parking, it will give customers the ultimate shopping experience.

Since it opened its first store in Sucat in 2001, the SM Hypermarket has been instrumental in creating the convenience of a first-rate fashion wet market, as well as a food and general merchandise store to provide one-stop shopping convenience for customers everywhere. SM Hypermarket values customers delight, supplier satisfaction and employee challenge. It also aims to be the place to shop, the place to sell, and the place to work.

While shopping in the new SM Hypermarket, customers can also enjoy eating out at food outlets like Mang Inasal, Bailey's Bakeshop, Jogo, Sterling Beer Express, Khaleb Shawarma, Pastries, Jose's Tom, BBQ, Hongkong style noodle, Mari Ranch Pizza and Buns Bay Hotdog Omelettes, and Hot Lin. They can also shop by David's Tea Parlor for a new look, Mood Vision Center for their eyewear, Watsons for their beauty and pharmacy requirements, and Art Gifts and Japan Home Center for more shopping fun.

Check out the newly opened SM Hypermarket along Shaw Boulevard. Other outlets are located at the SM Mall of Asia, the Block at SM City North Edsa, as well as the SM Supermalls in Sucat, Taytay, Bicutan, Sheridan, Fairview, and Bacoor. There are also located in SM Supermarkets in Pasig, Valenzuela, Montalban and Molino.

Editor Emerson D. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Jolie out of hospital after head bump

NEW YORK—A SPOKESPERSON FOR COLUMBIA PICTURES says Angelina Jolie is back on the set of her latest movie after a brief trip to the hospital for a minor bump to the head. Jolie sustained the injury Friday while filming an action sequence on Long Island, where the studio is producing her upcoming thriller "Salt." Spokesperson Steve Elbert says the actress was taken to a local hospital, examined on a precautionary measure, then released. AP

Gotta have a dream–and a star to help make it come true

BIG STARS ARE HELPING KIDS ALL OVER the country fulfill their dreams, lending their time and talent for free to assist a child-focused organization, World Vision.

Among these celebrity child advocates are singers Lea Salonga (above), Christian Bautista (below) and Nikki Gil (bottom), shown with just four of the 26,000 children that the organization is enrolling in each month.

Other Child Sponsors are Kevin Davila, Jolliver and Tricia Babao, Kris Aquino, Miriam Quiambao, Sam Milby and Sara Carpoglio. The happy beneficiaries are kids

DETAILS, A3

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ARTWORK | HIRO | PARK

At the Malls

GLORIETTA
Island Lovefest Fair
June 6-8, Activity Center

GREENBELT
The Marketplace at Greenbelt – offering signature dishes & unique food finds. June 6, 5pm-10pm; Greenbelt 3 Park

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Fitness at the Town
June 1-December 17, 6pm, MWTh; Town Plaza

MARKET! MARKET!
Yahoo! Purple Hunt at the Ayala Malls
June 5-7, Central Plaza

TRINOMA
The Wedding Journal Festival
June 6-7, Activity Center

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glorietta | GREENBELT | TOWN | Tri Noma

Richard Poon overtakes Charice twice

JEP's top music albums for the week May 11-17, based on Odyssey Music & Video store chain's sales report:

Top 10 Overall

1) "Now Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star; 2) "Pot Yen," Richard Poon, MCA Music; 3) "My Inspiration," Charice, Star; 4) "Giling Giling," Willie Revillame, Star; 5) "Long Time Ilong," Kamikazee, Universal Records; 6) "David Archuleta," David Archuleta, Sony Music; 7) "I'll Take Care of You (Platinum Edition)," Richard Poon, MCA; 8) "The Force," Lady Gaga, MCA;

9) "You're The Inspiration: Music of David Foster," Various Artists, Warner Music; 7) "Long Time Ilong," Kamikazee, Universal Records; 8) "David Archuleta," David Archuleta, Sony Music; 9) "I'll Take Care of You (Platinum Edition)," Richard Poon, MCA; 10) "The Force," Lady Gaga, MCA.

Top 10 OPM

1) "Now Na Nga," Willie Revillame, Star; 2) "Pot Yen," Richard Poon, MCA Music; 3) "My Inspiration," Charice, Star; 4) "Giling Giling," Willie Revillame, Star; 5) "Long Time Ilong," Kamikazee, Universal;

6) "I'll Take Care of You (Platinum Edition)," Richard Poon, MCA; 7) "Encore," Billy Crawford, Universal Records; 8) "Songs Rediscovered 2," Jed Madela, Universal; 9) "Time For Letting Go," Karylle, Polydisc Records; 10) "For Always," Marvin Marvoza, Polydisc.

TOP TEN

CHEER FACTOR

'Slumdog' kids to get homes

MUMBAI, INDIA—The government will give four more impoverished child stars of the hit movie "Slumdog Millionaire" new homes, the state's top official said Friday, ensuring the (probable) fate of the homeless children will soon even see one bcc two new apartments.

Rubina Ali, 9, and Ashutosh Mohammed Ismail, 10, both lost their homes this month when authorities demolished parts of their slum in Mumbai.

Ashok Chavan, the chief minister of the state of Maharashtra, said he approved the transfer of two government apartments to the children on Friday.

"Slumdog Millionaire' has won Oscar recognition," Chavan told the state-owned Press. "We thought this would be a proper thing to house these children seeing in the film."

Filmmakers have also promised the stars some apartments.

"I'm very happy," said Rubina. AP

Gotta ...

From page D1

Sem poon commissioner.

"Every kid has a dream, but ... most kids cannot fulfill their dreams due to poverty," notes Sen Milby.

"I've been given the opportunity to change the world by making a difference in the lives of children," says Sen Gil.

"I feel good to join an organization that has already proven itself to be helpful," adds Lee. "Education is a gift. When you're equipped with the knowledge and skills to navigate this real lif, then you become a success story!"

CINEMA ACCESS: 395-5555

MOVIEWORLD

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www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM 2 / Terminator Salvation
3 HOUSE / NIGHT at the MUSEUM 2
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
5 ANGELS & DEMONS
6 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
7 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE
8 BFF: BESTFRIEND FOREVER
9 TUTOK
10 AGATON & MINDY

ERMITA

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
4 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
5 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER
6 ANGELS & DEMONS
7 HOUSE / TUTOK

METRO EAST

1 ANGELS & DEMONS
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
5 HOUSE
6 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
7 BFF: BEST FRIEND FOREVER
8 X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE

NOVALICHES — **PIONEER**

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 HEAVENLY TOUCH
1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 ANGELS & DEMONS
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 TERMINATOR: SALVATION

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STA. ROSA — **LIPA**

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

DASMARINAS — **IMUS**

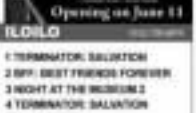
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

STARMILLS

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
2 DES-NA SI LOLO
3 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
4 ANGELS & DEMONS
5 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
6 TERMINATOR: SALVATION

ANGELES — **TACLOBAN**

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 BFF: BESTFRIEND FOREVER
3 ANGELS & DEMONS
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2



BACOLOD — **ILOILO**

1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
3 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
4 ANGELS & DEMONS
5 THE HAUNTING in CONNECTICUT
6 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
1 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
2 BFF: BEST FRIENDS FOREVER
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2
4 TERMINATOR: SALVATION
5 AMUSEMENT
6 ANGELS & DEMONS

TUTOK

NOW SHOWING

Exclusively at MOVIEWORLD

STEP'N Heavens, Gino dela Pena, drifting champ Alex Perez and Alvion Ramos in Cebu City

'It Girl' in e-mail smear campaign

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

"I'm dating passively," says Rhian

I HAD A BLAST AT PLDT MYSHED ULTRA friendfound Shower campaign in Cebu with my cool colleagues Shirley Flamen and Wilson Hang. Alvion Ramos, Gino dela Pena and Stephanie Ramores joined the revelry, too.

Cebuanos enjoyed sampling the high-tech features of the Speedster Duo, a mobile Internet hub. The other My DSL "It Girl," Isabel Oli, was missing in action. Good for her because if she were around, she would have bumped into Ice vs. Paolo Contis, and his OL Di Baby Lisa, who were also billboard at Fuentebuo where Team PLDT stayed.

I screamed Rhian about her brewing romance with JC de Vera. "I have no significant other for now," she said. "I'm dating passively."

She's endorsing an Internet provider yet she's the target of a smear campaign circulating via e-mail. "I guess there are crazy/bored people who have nothing better to do," she said.

The "It Girl" refuses to be fazed. She was confirmed as the SM Cebu store discussed DCs and laptops bundled with iSE plans were selling briskly.

The highlight of the event was the chilling exhibition by champion drifters Alex Perez and Gave Feliciano. The crowd was stunned with their unique stunts such as driving without a steering wheel and with an open door while surrounded by Bonsai's Hot Dancers. Dino's drifting school has celebrity students like Ryan and Judy Ann Agoncillo. "Ryan and Judey bought a Skyline and fit 7 for drifting," said Dino. "After their wedding, Ryan wanted to go drifting to release the stress he had preparing for the big day." Ryan should have driven today as rain overpaired with style. It would have made their bash-bash wedding series more extraordinary.

"The roadster campaign has aggressively conquered all cities nationwide," said PLDT Businesses Gary Dujali. "And we plan to launch even more activities. Our Speedster bus will roam the campuses."

DUJY MORE is the answer to Internet addicts need for speed.

Twist of fate

Karylle refuses to comment about her replacing Marian Rivera as endorser of Blue Water Day Spa. "I've long been patronizing the spa so I hope all no long happening today. Twist of fate long," she explains. "The first endorser, Read Tuazon is a good friend. His manager was the one who told me about the place and I loved it instantly."

Since she can't be pregnant-free, she tries to be somewhere by frequenting the spa. "We addicted to their herbal combo massage and Spa Theater where you can watch a movie while getting a foot spa." What if her co-endorsers Akihiro Sato-country boy? "I can't really say," she replies, "because I barely know him. But during the shoot, he was a real gentleman. I was freezing in my bathing suit so he made sure I had a towel and jacket to cover up between takes."

After her split-up with Hayden Kho, has her taste in men changed? "I don't go for a particular type anymore," she says. "More than the physical, I try to talk to guys' souls, see what they're about and see if we can make each other think and laugh." Karylle is surely laughing all the way to the spa now that she's doing it up.

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